

CONTENTS

1. Maharaja Swati Tirunal <i>Dr. V.S. Sharma</i>	03
2. The Swati Controversy <i>A. Seshan</i>	07
3. Bhava of Saveri in Kathakali Sangeetam <i>Dr. P.N. Prabhavathy</i>	11
4. Nada Yoga and Raga Chikitsa : The Two Eyes of Indian Music Therapy <i>Dr. T.V. Sairam</i>	16
5. Michael, Mozart, Muthuswamy <i>Shyamala Sajjani</i>	20
6. Future of Classical Dance in Karnataka <i>Araty Shetty</i>	25
7. Lec-Dem on Oottukadu Venkata Kavi by Chitravina N Ravikiran <i>Report by Nalini Dinesh</i>	30
8. Sri Muthuswamy Dikshitar – Exploring the six facets of the genius by Geetha Rajagopal <i>Book Review by A. Seshan</i>	35
9. Tagore Academy Puraskar for Rajee Narayan <i>Jyothi Mohan</i>	37
10. ReaderSpeak	38
11. Sabha Roundup <i>Report</i>	39
12. Happenings at the Vidyalaya <i>Report by Nalini Dinesh</i>	41

The views expressed in Shanmukha are the writers' own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Editor/Publisher. It may please be noted that articles sent to Shanmukha for publication will not be returned.

Printed & Published by **Shri. V. S. Amarnath Sury** on behalf of Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha (Regd.) & designed & printed by Concise Graphics & Marketing and published from **Sri Shanmukhananda Bharatiya Sangeetha Vidyalaya**, Plot H. Bhaudaji Road Extension, Near King's Circle Rly. Station, Sion (West), Mumbai - 400022.

Editor : **Smt. Radha Namboodiri**, Registered with Registrar of Newspapers for India. R. N. No. 27938/1975

Website : <http://www.shanmukhananda.com/Shanmukha Journal.html>

As one reads about great Indian composers of another era, or sings or listens to the lyrics they wrote, one invariably finds plenty to intrigue, ponder over and surmise. The analyzing game is more deliciously challenging because of the relative lack of written documentation in the musical field while there was a greater prevalence of oral dissemination. Still, it is not impossible to come up with reasonably logical conclusions to many conundrums through intelligent analysis.

One of the more intriguing musical personalities in Carnatic music and one who has been the topic of some controversy in recent years, is the composer of Travancore royalty, Maharaja Swati Tirunal (whose bicentennial is being celebrated this year). Dr. V.S. Sharma provides a fascinating portrait of the Maharaja's multidimensional personality while A. Seshan delves into the debate that raged over him in recent years (and still continues to simmer).

Dr. P.N. Prabhavathy studies the way Saveri has been handled in Kathakali music and how it differs from the way it is used in Carnatic music.

The significance of sound and primordial OM and its role in music therapy is discussed by Dr. T.V. Sairam in an article.

A Carnatic music teacher is faced with her students' sudden urge to play pop music on the veena. What happens next? Read on to find out in Shyamala Sajjani's story.

Araty Shetty provides an insight into changes in the classical dance scene in recent times and what they augur for the future.

Oottukadu Venkata Kavi is yet another composer whose life and times are shrouded in some mystery. Nalini Dinesh reports on a lecture-demonstration given by leading musician Chitravina N Ravikiran on this composer's works at a Mumbai sabha in June, in which he also touched on some of the points that one needs to keep in mind while objectively studying and analyzing the works of a composer.

Shanmukha congratulates Rajee Narayan on being conferred the Tagore Academy Puraskar, Jyothi Mohan pays tribute.

A.Seshan reviews a book on Muthuswamy Dikshitar written by Geeta Rajagopal and published by the sabha.

Nalini Dinesh and Jyothi Mohan report on events of the last quarter at the Sabha and Vidyalaya.

MAHARAJA SWATI TIRUNAL

Dr. V.S. Sharma



Maharaja Swati Tirunal

The illustrious royal family of Travancore is famed for its many-splendoured existence through long centuries. There was a galaxy of distinguished personalities among the Travancore kings and Sri Swati Tirunal (born 16th April 1813) seems to be the most popular figure. Able rulers like Martanda Varma and Kartika Tirunal Balarama Varma gave shape to the Travancore state and ensured its political stability.

Kings Kartika Tirunal, Ayilyam Tirunal, Visakham Tirunal were all good writers. Kartika Tirunal (18th century) composed six or more Attakathas or plays of Kathakali and his monumental work on Natya,

Balarama Bharatam, is considered to be the foremost text on Angikabhinaya. Kartika Tirunal's brother Utram Tirunal also was a poet and connoisseur of arts like Kartika Tirunal. His uncle Martanda Varma patronised master poets like Unnayi Varrier and Kunchan Nambiar. Ayilyam Tirunal made a beautiful Malayalam prose translation of Kalidasa's Abhijnana Shakuntalam in 1882, perhaps the first of its kind. Visakha Vijayam Mahakavyam was written by Kerala Varma Valiyakovil Thampuran depicting the greatness of the next king Visakham Tirunal. Sri Mulam Tirunal also was a great patron of art.

The last Maharaja Sri Chithira Tirunal Rama Varma who is famed for the historic Temple Entry Proclamation (1936) continued to give liberal patronage to art and literature. As the trustee of the great Sri Padmanabha Swami Temple, His Highness organised every year, during the pooja festival, the Navaratri musical concert programme in the Navaratri Mandapam. Major concerts of distinguished South Indian musicians are still being arranged in the Navaratri Mandapam, during the festival time. This music festival was first envisaged, planned and arranged by the composer-musicologist, Sri Swati Tirunal. The Maharaja himself popularised the 'Kacheri' style of singing Karnatic music in Kerala, especially in Travancore. Among his 400 musical compositions the noted Navaratri Kritis are being sung in order consecutively as follows:

Day	Kirtana	Raga	Tala
1	Devi Jagajjanani	Shankarabharanam	Adi
2	Pahi Maam Sri Vageeshwari	Kalyani	Adi
3	Devi Paavane	Saaveri	Adi
4	Bhaarati Maamava	Todi	Adi
5	Janani Maamava	Bhairavi	Tripata
6	Saroruhaasana Jaaye	Pantuvarali	Adi
7	Janani Paahi	Shuddha Saveri	Tripata
8	Paahi Janani	Natakuranji	Tripata
9	Paahi Parvata Nandini	Aarabhi	Adi

Though Swati Tirunal lived and ruled only for a very short span of time, he ensured for himself a permanent place in the cultural history of India. He attained proficiency in 13 languages including Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu, Hindustani, English, Marathi and Persian and good knowledge in various subjects ranging from astronomy to Vedanta.

One of his teachers and later his own minister, Dewan Subba Rao, wrote in August 1827, "The Prince has already made considerable progress in his learning and my conscience assures me that I have done my duty sincerely as a tutor, because the liberal knowledge he has acquired under my tuitions by the study of Ethics, Mathematics, History and Logic is I think adequate to render him worthy of the rank he is destined to hold in society". At that time Sri Swati Tirunal was only 14 years old and later he might have become well-versed in classics including Srimad Bhagavata, Ramayana and Mahabharata. The prince earned sound scholarship in music, theoretical and practical. He showed interest in all fine arts and there are many evidences to substantiate this.

As an eminent ruler, Sri Swati Tirunal completely modernised his state with a rare vision, courage and confidence. In 1836 he introduced census for the first time in the state. Then the population was 13 lakhs only. The Maharaja established an Observatory in 1837, ordered a land survey, introduced English education in schools, framed a constitution for the state, started General Hospital with an English physician, established judiciary and court, founded a press, established the Trivandrum Public Library and The Oriental Manuscripts Library, modernised the old "Nayar Brigade" in British style, started a zoo and dairy and abolished the age-old cruel systems of punishment such as "Suchindram Kaimukku" (dipping the finger of alleged criminals in boiled ghee as test).

Such notable reforms prove the Maharaja's remarkable administrative ability, far-sightedness and interest in the well-being of his subjects. He made his country a "model state" in every sense.

During his rule of a decade and a half, the versatile Maharaja unfortunately was totally displeased with the attitudes shown and steps taken against him by the then British resident who had a control over the rulers of Travancore. The autocratic interferences of General Cullen, the Resident, upset the sensitive Swati Tirunal and he became totally dejected by the humiliating treatment meted out by the Britishers. It resulted in his gradual retirement from active life and entering a life of self-abnegation. His mind was completely surrendered at the feet of the family deity, the Lord of Tiruvananthapuram, Sri Padmanabha. This pious ruler died in 1846 at the age of 33. Today, after 164 years, Sri Swati Tirunal is still revered as a great musicologist and lover of art.

He is rightly equated with Saint Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Shyama Shastri, the trio of Carnatic Music, who were contemporaries of the Maharaja. Perhaps his literary and artistic contributions alone will be remembered for all time. The Maharaja was a great patron of art and artistes and he was renowned as a man of letters, as a musician-poet.

Literary Works

To the surprise of everybody, Sri Swati Tirunal, during his short life span, wrote many works of literary merit, devotional value and artistic excellence. The literary works are Bhakti Manjari (kavya of 1000 verses), Sri Padmanabha Shatakam (kavya of 100 verses), Syanandurapura Varana Prabandham (champu), Kuchelopakhyanam, Ajamilopakhyanam, Muhanaprasa Antyaprasavyavastha, Anyapadesa Satakavyakhya and Ulsava Prabhandham.

Bhakti Manjari is a great work written in lucid Sanskrit. Srimad Bhagavata Puranam and the Narayaneeyam of Melputtur Narayana Bhattatiri had inspired and influenced the Maharaja in its composition and content. This work is in effect a devotional thesis which elaborates the principle of Navavidha Bhakti Sampradaya suggested in the Bhagavata Purana. Both Narayaneeyam and Bhaktimanjari are unique works of Kerala which have full bearing on Vaishnava Bhakti cult.

Sri Padmanabhashatakam is a poem in 100 verses in praise of Lord Sri Padmanabha while the

champu Syanandurapura Varana Prabandham is a detailed description of the city of Syanandurapura (Tiruvananthapuram), the abode of Lord Sri Padmanabha. The festivals of the temple are also described in an elaborate manner and with great devotion. Kuchelopakhyanam and Ajamilopakhyanam are beautiful, musical and poetic works suited for Harikatha and these might have been inspired by Meruswami, a distinguished court singer and Harikatha performer of Tiruvananthapuram palace during Swati Tirunal's time. Neelakantha Dikshitar's Anyapadesa Satakam is interpreted briefly by the Maharaja in the Anyapadesa Sataka Vyakhya. Both Malayalam and Sanskrit versions of the Vyakhya are available but it is not known whether both were prepared by the Maharaja or not. The Muhanaprasa Antyaprasavyavastha is purely technical work in which the Maharaja has indicated the influence of the compositions of Margadarsi Sesha Iyengar, the 17th century musicologist and composer. In this masterly work the author has pointed out the special features and principles to be adopted in musical compositions. The Ulsava Prabandham, is another musical composition, written in Malayalam, in ten parts; each one describes the ten-day festival of Sri Padmanabha Swami Temple in chronological order.

Musical Compositions

The above said works are really of great relevance in the context of the royal contribution to the literature of Kerala. Though the literary works reveal the poet's indomitable urge to sing the glories of God, the quintessence of the author's artistic genius is much reflected in the musical compositions which are about 400 in number.

Sri Swati Tirunal got initiated into music by his own aunt Rani Gouri Parvati Bai, herself a lover of music and veena player. Then he was inspired by the noted musicologist – Kathakali composer, Irayimman Thampi, and also learnt from other teachers. From a very early age, Swati acquired wisdom to enjoy, appreciate and apply music. He could play veena and swarbat. Gradually he started composing songs. Among his noted musical creations are Padas, Keertanas, Varnas (Stava and Shringara), Javalis, Swarajatis and Tillanas. He composed in various languages, Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu, Manipravala, Hindustani and Malayalam. In all his compositions he narrates the glories of God, either Sri Padmanabha or some other deity of his choice. The Navavidhabhaktimala kritis (Navaratnamala kritis) and Navaratri Kritis are excellent compositions. The 39 Hindustani compositions are also saturated with deep devotion to the Lord. The noted song *Vishweshwara darsan kar* in Sindhubhairavi raga and other such songs are really superb. It does not matter in which language they are written. At the feet of Sri Padmanabha, the Maharaja had completely surrendered himself and this dedication, 'Poorna Samarpana' is found in all his compositions.

There is no place for any doubt concerning the authenticity of the kritis of Sri Swati Tirunal. It is also heard that the Maharaja himself sent some of the songs composed by him to various schools for teaching. And the songs bear the mudra (signature) of Sri Padmanabha. The Maharaja wanted to meet Tyagaraja and invited him to his court one day, but the saint only said "I am happy to learn that the Maharaja also worships the same Lord to whom I have dedicated myself". The saint singer passed away a few days after the demise of the Maharaja. Muthuswami Dikshitar might have come to Tiruvananthapuram and met the Maharaja in 1845 or 1846. During the time of his reign, the Maharaja was much recognised by musicians and art lovers of the country and his court was famed for the great patronage he extended to artistes without any consideration of state, language or the field of art they belonged to.

Sri Swati Tirunal was solely responsible for the popularisation of the Mohiniyattam style of dancing as it is extant today. He composed about 50 Padas suited for dancing. 'Viraha Bhakti' is the main sentiment depicted in these Padas. Lord Sri Padmanabha is pictured as one who is

adored and loved with utmost faith and dedication. The compositions used for dance are often being sung by musicians on the concert platform too.

To a certain extent, the musical compositions of Sri Swati Tirunal are mystical. Some songs like *Bhavayami Raghuramam* (ragamalika), a beautiful Ramayana kriti which has become very popular after its recording by the musical maestro M.S. Subbulakshmi, are mythological. The Maharaja has handled even rare ragas like Samantamalahari and Gopikavasantam and has proved his mastery of music. His illustrious artistic mind overflowed with devotion to Sri Padmanabha. A detailed description of his compositions is not attempted here.

Diamond Jubilee of Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha

The year 2012-2013 is a milestone for our Sabha. The Sabha completes six glorious decades in the service of fine arts. The celebrations began on 7th July 2012 with a Ganapati Homam and a morning concert by Gayathri Girish, accompanied by V.V.S. Murari (violin) and Poongulam Subramaniam (mridangam).

A 60-nadaswaram ensemble led by Vyasarpadi G. Kothandaraman performed on 14th July 2012 while a 60-violin concert led by A. Kanyakumari performed on 15th July 2012.

During the Diamond Jubilee Inaugural Function on 17th July 2012 the Sabha Anthem was adopted, the Sabha Flag was unfurled, a First Day Cover was released and seven exemplary individuals who have added immense value to life were honoured. They are E. Sreedharan, Nemi Bhagat Baba, Manohar Aich, T. Mahadeva, M.C. Suresh, Jadav Payeng and Horizon (N.G.O). Violinist Prof. T.N. Krishnan, who had played in the inaugural concert at the sabha in 1963 (he had accompanied the late Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar with the late Palghat Mani Iyer on the mridangam), was also felicitated. An exhibition of stamps on "Arts & Artistes" by Department of Posts, Government of India was inaugurated. Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, former Rashtrapati of India, presided over the Inaugural Function.

THE SWATI CONTROVERSY

A. Seshan

Controversies are common in all areas of intellectual activity. Music, in general, and Carnatic music, in particular, are no exceptions. Often one is no wiser after all that is said and written on the subject under dispute because the level of discussion is not of a high standard. In the highly segmented Indian society personal prejudices due to religion, caste, language, etc., sometimes colour the course of arguments of even knowledgeable and qualified intellectuals. The intense debate that the Carnatic music world saw during the 1980s on the attribution of the status of a vaggayakara to Maharaja Swati Tirunal of the erstwhile State of Travancore was characterized by as much heat as light emitted by the combatants on either side of the controversy.

*Vaggeyakara*¹

The one outstanding feature of Indian art music is the concept of vaggayakara, one who conceives the lyric and also sets it to music often simultaneously. In the West this combination does not exist in art music though it does in pop songs. Thus Mendelssohn composed incidental music for the *Wedding March of The Midsummer Night's Dream* of Shakespeare. A vaggayakara is an architect of both vag (word) and geya (sound or music). He is also known as dhatu-matukara. The term 'composer', as used in the West, refers to the person who sets the music (sangeet or dhatu) to the lyric (geet or matu) of another one. Although our vaggayakaras are often called composers it is strictly not correct in view of the definition given above. In our country there have been several of them through the centuries. The uniqueness of the combination of geetkar and sangeetkar in one person in the Indian system is brought out by the fact that there is no equivalent single word in English for vaggayakara. What is interesting is the inspired nature of their contributions. When Tyagaraja sang a kriti it was a finished product even as it was being conceived in his mind. It was complete with not only sahitya but also raga swarupa, tala, gamakas, sangatis, etc. It was an integrated package. Today we often refer to the kritis of the vaggayakaras to know the real swarupa of a raga in terms of what note should be used and how and what should be eschewed. In other words, lakshana (grammar) and lakshya (practical music) are perfectly intertwined. Tyagaraja was not known to have written down the lyric and set it to music. His disciples learnt the songs by listening to him as he sang and passed them on to the next generation. This oral transmission has had its own merits and demerits unlike in the case of the Western masters whose scores, as written by them, are preserved and available even after centuries. There are no controversies about the intentions of the composer. This is a plus point for the West. One hears of interpolation (idaichcherukal in Tamil) in many kritis, particularly of Tyagaraja – something that one does not come across in the Western system. Tyagaraja's first draft was his final draft! He and some of his contemporaries and successors seem to have never thought of revising the sahitya or the tune.

However, notwithstanding the definition given above, sangeeta sastras refer to three types of vaggayakaras viz., Uttama, Madhyama and Adhama. The Uttama is one who is the author of both the text or sahitya of the kriti and its tune (music or varnamettu). The Madhyama takes someone else's lyric and sets it to his own tune. The Adhama writes the lyric and then uses the tune of another. Sometimes there is an overlap in these categories, as referred to later. It is obvious that

¹The first para is an extract from "Intellectual Achievements in Indian Art Music", A. Seshan, in Sruti Ranjani Annual 2010, The India Music and Dance Society, Philadelphia, USA. See http://sruti.org/library/Sruti%20Ranjani/2010/Sruti_Ranjani_2010.pdf.

the terms indicate the gradation of the status or standing of the vaggeyakara in the descending order. We have examples of all the three types. The Trinity (Tyagaraja, Dikshitar and Sastri) are supreme examples of the first category. Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavata was a great Uttama vaggeyakara in his own right. He had discovered many ragas like Valaji, Karnaranjani etc. But, at the request of the Maharaja of Mysore in whose court he was an asthana vidwan (musician laureate), he also set to music the compositions in Kannada of local scholars. *Bhuvaneshwari* (Mohana Kalyani) is reported to be an example of his tuning a kriti written by another person. Periasami Thooran, a great Tamil scholar and poet, wrote many songs. They were set to music by experts like Turaiyur Rajagopala Sarma, T.K. Govinda Rao, K.V. Narayanaswamy and Semmangudi Srinivasier. Kalki's *Vandadam* in Harikambhoji follows the varnamettu of *Undedi* of Tyagaraja. Pallavi Gopala Iyer belonged to the Uttama type. But still he could not help composing *Needu charana pankaja mule* dripping with all the gamakas of Kalyani in purna varik style a la Tyagaraja's *Sundari nee divya roopamunu* in the same raga due to the latter's irresistible influence. Even in the case of the Trinity, occasionally one can see the echo of each other's kritis. I think that it was a way that they paid a tribute to each other. For example, *Tera teeyaga raada* in Gowlipantu of Tyagaraja reminds one of Syama Sastri's *Tarunam idamma* in the same raga. *Manasu swaadheenamaina* of Tyagaraja and *Akshayalinga vibho* of Dikshitar, both in Sankarabharanam, are close in their tunes. At this point of time, it is not possible to say who paid the tribute to whom, or, who composed the tune first. There are also instances of the same vaggeyakara composing two of his kritis in the same varnamettu. Syama Sastri's Kalyani kritis – *Himadri sute pahimam* and *Birana varalichchi* are good examples as also Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer's Melakarta Ragamalikai and *Pannagendrasayana* and *Pannagadrissa*, attributed to Swati Tirunal. In popular use and in the literature vaggeyakara is generally meant to refer to the Uttama type. It should be kept in mind that the term "Adhama" does not indicate any slur of plagiarism or lack of scruples. It is just a question of gradation. Perhaps a better nomenclature could have been devised to take away any adverse ethical implication.

Was Swati Tirunal a vaggeyakara?

The elaborate explanation of the term vaggeyakara in the previous paras is necessary to evaluate the controversy on considering Swati Tirunal as one such person. Was he a vaggeyakara at all and, if so, to what category he belonged? The provocation for the controversy raised by Veena vidwan S. Balachander was the book on the Maharaja by Semmangudi Srinivasier and the inclusion of his portrait on the dais of the hallowed institution in Chennai, the Music Academy, along with those of Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri. Till then Tamil Nadu (then Madras province) was used to the idea of the Trinity of Carnatic Music comprising the last three. Now the addition of Swati Tirunal meant that the Trinity became a Quartet. It was to this that Balachander objected questioning the Maharaja's credentials as a vaggeyakara.² Vikram Sampath's biography of Balachander gives a good account of the controversy.³ I am summarizing the story based on his version.

Semmangudi's book followed an earlier volume on the Maharaja by S. Venkatasubramonia Iyer. Although he had raised doubts on the attribution of certain kritis to Swati Tirunal he left no doubt that he had considered him as a vaggeyakara equal to the Trinity. In fact considering the listing of

²Semmangudi Srinivasier treats the king on a par with the Trinity in his book *Maharaja Swathi Thirunal*, National Book Trust, India, 1986 (English translation by K.S. Srinivasan)

³*Voice of the Veena: S Balachander – A Biography*, Vikram Sampath, Rain Tree, 2012

the king's accomplishments in various fields some of which were exaggerated the book read more like a hagiography than a biography. One sample is the statement: "From an ordinary devotee he rose to being a divine personality himself with a stature akin to that of Sri Adi Shankara himself." Semmangudi's book attracted the attention of Balachander because it was brought out by the National Book Trust (NBT), which generally issued translations in all the Indian languages of its English publications. Balachander pricked holes in the Semmangudi version after considerable research into all the available sources and was anxious that the myth of Swati Tirunal as a vaggeyakara should not be propagated throughout the country. Veena Vidwan K.P. Sivanandam opened the Pandora's Box when he claimed that the compositions attributed to Swati Tirunal were really not his but were all the creations of his ancestor Vadivelu, who was a prominent musician-cum-nattuvanar in the Travancore court and close to the king. The proof was the manuscripts available in the family. Balachander conceded the possibility of the Maharaja being a mini composer who took the help of others in his court to set his lyrics to music. But he objected to putting the Maharaja on a pedestal along with the Trinity. As the arguments on both sides of the controversy heated up Balachander came out with some more documentary evidence to question whether there was a king called Swati Tirunal at all! His suspicion was that it was all a part of well-orchestrated glorification of the Travancore court with the help of those who had benefited from its munificence. Now the debate reached a more combative level. No holds were barred. Abuses were as many as arguments. As his letters to NBT did not elicit any response he filed a Writ of Mandamus faulting it for publishing Semmangudi's book without any verification of the facts. NBT had earlier appointed Dr R. Sathyanarayana, a renowned musicologist of Mysore, to comment on Balachander's views. He pointed out that there were mainly two issues to consider on the basis of Balachander's objections. One, that Swati Tirunal was not a historical figure, but a fictitious creation; and two, the musical compositions attributed to the Maharaja were spuriously foisted on him by persons with vested interests. On the first question, he found Balachander's refutation of the historicity of Swati Tirunal being wholly "unjustified and baseless". He argued that Swati Tirunal was indeed a composer based on available evidence like that of *Sangita Sampradaya Pradarsini* of Subbarama Dikshitar. But he was quick to add that the actual number of his compositions was far less than what was being claimed and it was evident that spurious compositions had come to assume his authorship. He also commented that most songs of Swati Tirunal were inferior to the best songs of the musical Trinity in both words and music.

Surprisingly, the NBT did not publicise the report until the case went to the court. After Balachander's death his family decided that since the report of Dr. Sathyanarayana had in a way validated some of the points made by the former, including his objection to the Maharaja being considered on a par with the Trinity, there was no point in carrying on with the case and applied for its withdrawal. Thus the whole controversy, which had engaged the attention of the musical fraternity of the Carnatic system for several years, ended in an anticlimax.

The Truth is in the Middle Path

There is enough evidence to show that the Maharaja was a scholarly person, well-versed in musicology. Semmangudi quotes J.A. Brown in his book, "The Maharaja has acquired fame all over India because of his interest in education, his cultured mind and his ability to compose songs and also because of his proficiency in several languages". So there is nothing to be surprised at if he had taken a hand in writing the texts of kritis. However, one can certainly question the authorship of many compositions attributed to him. From what we learn on the controversy it seems that while he wrote the lyrics he took the help of the scholars in his court to set them to music. Thus he is closer to the concept of a geetkar rather than a vaggeyakara since he does not come under any of the three categories of the latter described earlier. It seems that Carnatic music, as we know it today, was not much prevalent in Kerala at the time of Swati Tirunal's birth. It was Sopanam, a system in which the notes are plain without gamakas. It has Carnatic ragas but

also its own like Samanthamalahari. Alapana is in akara and 'ta', 'ra' and 'na' of Carnatic music are eschewed. There is no niraval or swaraprastaram. It is temple music practised by hereditary ambalavasis like Marars and Poduvals. It also provides accompaniment to Kathakali and Krishnanattam. Born in such a milieu it is difficult to believe that his knowledge acquired after the arrival of musicians like the Tanjore Quartette would have enabled him to notate songs with all their nuances with expertise in the short period of his life. The fact that there was no oral tradition of singing his kritis led to musicians like Muthiah Bhagavathar and Semmangudi setting the sahyas to music. There is a need to conduct a scientific study of the authorship of the compositions attributed to not only Swati Tirunal but also to Tyagaraja for, according to some experts, there are kritis stated to be Tyagaraja's but they were the later-day creations of others. I have read learned articles in which the statistical theory of probability is employed to establish the authorship of the plays attributed to Shakespeare.⁵ A similar scientific approach is needed to resolve the controversy over Swati Tirunal. It should be done by a panel of musicians, musicologists, linguists, historians and statisticians. The ordinary rasika may say that it is a waste of time to engage in such controversies as long as the songs are good. Then why should we have history as a discipline? Can we not let bygones be bygones?

⁴Ibid.

⁵"The Swati Controversy", A. Seshan, Sruti (22), 1 April 1986

OBITUARY

R. Venkatesh, a well-known percussionist of Mumbai and a banker by profession, passed away on 12th May 2012. Venkatesh learned mridangam from vidwan Malayappa Iyer and later on switched over to morsing which he mastered on his own. He was a B High Grade artiste of AIR, Mumbai and had accompanied various senior artistes in Mumbai and other places. A recipient of Taalmani award from Surmani Sansad, Mumbai, he served as joint honorary secretary of Bhandup Fine Arts, Bhandup, Mumbai.

Bhava of Saveri in Kathakali Sangeetam

Dr. Prabhavathy P.N.



A Kathakali artiste

This study was performed as part of the PhD thesis titled "Raga Saveri- a study", submitted to Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady.

It looks at the use of raga Saveri in Kathakali, a traditional theatre form of Kerala, keeping two principal objectives in mind:

1. Observing the similarities/differences in rendition of the raga with respect to the Carnatic style.
2. Finding any patterns in the selection of this raga for usage in the padams (verses); so that one may get an insight into the bhava/rasa achieved by the use of this raga.

An attempt of this kind, outside the realms of Carnatic music, is made since theatre art forms like these use music as the mouth piece of the characters on stage. So the mood of the padams attributed to Saveri could be an indicator to the mood effectively portrayed by the raga. The result thereof could be a guideline to future composition as well.

First, a brief introduction to Kathakali, its musical style, accompaniments etc is given, followed by a brief analysis of alapana, shlokam-s and padam-s in Saveri, The analysis ends with a summarizing discussion.

At the end, a concise chart giving details of the analyzed padam-s, shlokam-s and alapana sessions is given, for a birds' eye view of the study.

Kathakali

Kathakali is a classical art form of Kerala, which dates back to the late 17th century. The name Kathakali derives its name from 'Katha' which means story and 'Kali' which means play. Kathakali is a harmonious blend of five forms of art namely, Sahityam (literature), Sangeetam (music), Chitram (painting), Natyam (acting) and Nrityam (dance).

Kathakali is said to have been inspired by ancient South Indian art forms like Koodiyattam, Krishnanattam, Teyyam and Kalarippayattu besides others. It borrows its themes mainly from stories in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the famous epics of Hindu mythology.

Kathakali Sangeetam

There are no verbal dialogues rendered by actors in Kathakali. Characters converse through mudra-s shown by the dancers. The dance is choreographed to the music of Kathakali Sangeetam which also serves as the mouth piece of the characters. Its purpose, therefore, is mainly to render the story in verses or padam-s and to support the portrayal of the bhava-s and rasa-s by the dancers. Kathakali songs are sung in the background by vocalists, usually two in number. Lyrics are in the form of verse sung loudly by "Ponnaani" (the lead vocalist). Vocal support is given by "Shinkiti". The style of singing adopted in Kathakali is Sopana Sangeetam.

Accompaniment to the singers is provided by percussion instruments "Chenda" and "Maddalam". On special occasions like divine or royal appearances, a soft percussion instrument "Edakka" and "Shankha" (conch) are added. "Chengila" (gong) and "Ilattaalam" (cymbals) - both handled by the singers themselves- are also a part of the orchestra¹.

(A) Alapana

Alapana comes only in the beginning of a scene and not in between. The main aim of raga alapana in Kathakali Sangeetam is to reveal the identity of the raga and to set the mood for the padam which follows. There is only limited scope here to exhibit the creative ability of the musician. The alapana need not last for more than 3-4 minutes².

Alapana is done using akaaram only and no other syllables are used. The musician has the liberty to repeat phrases or sangati-s in raga. Unlike Carnatic music, alapana is always done in Chempata tala of 8 akshara kala, irrespective of the tala of the following padam. But kalapramana of alapana should correspond to that of the succeeding padam³.

During the samples listened to as part of the study, it was noted that raga alapana starts from madhya sthayi, takes a sojourn to mandara sthayi, then proceeds to tarasthayi and concludes at madhyasthayi in a very orderly manner.

A notable speciality in the Saveri alapana is the graha swara. Madhyasthayi rishabham is often taken as graha swara. This is in contrast to the general practice in Carnatic music where rishabham is seldom seen used as graha swara. The oscillation given for rishabham is similar to that used in Carnatic music.

The following phrases which are absent in today's Carnatic Saveri alapana are sung in Kathakali:

- rrs nrs RRSSnSRS⁴ - however a similar phrase SnSnSR is mentioned in the Carnatic music text Sangeeta Sampradaya Pradarsini⁵.
- Nsrgrgr - a similar phrase nSRGRS is mentioned in the Carnatic music book Krtimanimalai⁶. Repetition of phrases is seen in raga alapana.

In the 3 shlokam-s available for study, it was noted that most of the sanchara-s are woven around tara sthayi shadjam. All the 3 shlokam-s concluded on tara sthayi shadjam.

In the shlokam *Kamalajabhavamukhyai* (from the drama Narakasura vadham) the phrase Snp has been used more than once.

(B) Shlokam-s

¹Interview with Kathakali Sangeetam stalwart Sri Kalanilayam Unnikrishnan
²Interview with Kathakali Sangeetam stalwart late Kalamandalam Sankaran Embrandiri
³Interview with Kathakali Sangeetam stalwart Sri Kalanilayam Unnikrishnan.
⁴For notation, upper case denotes tarasthayi, lower case denotes madhyasthayi and lower case with a dot below shows mandarasthayi swara-s
⁵Ramanathan, S., Dr. Rajam Ayyer B, eds., Trans. Sangita Sampradaya Pradarsini of Subbarama Dikshitar. vol 1. p232
⁶Iyengar, R Rangaramanuja. Sri Kriti mani malai. 4th ed. vol 3. p 226

Sanchara-s touching tarasthayi pa and dha are also seen.

S R MMM M M MPDPM G,,,R SRG, R
 Hi ma gi ri suta ye nnum njā.....n

Here ga is sung as a long plain note, which is not a very common sanchara used by Carnatic musicians. However, Sree K.V.Narayanaswamy used to render this sanchara.

(C) Padam-s

Listening to the available Saveri padam-s sung by different musicians, one can see that most of the sanchara-s are concentrated on madhya sthayi and tara sthayi. Mandara sthayi sanchara-s are not seen. Similarly, there are no sanchara-s seen above tarasthayi gandharam. In certain padam-s there are no sanchara-s below madhyasthayi ma. All these padam-s use panchamam as graha swara, the first phrase being in ascent.

Some common sanchara-s seen in these padam-s are –

pdS,nd pdRSnd mpdpmg,r srm,m, dpmpdS;ndpmp,dpmg,r SRGR

(D) Discussion

It is seen that Saveri raga is used in Kathakali Sangeetam mainly for padam-s and shlokam-s depicting bhakti (devotion). Padam-s denoting santosham (happiness), adbhutam (surprise) etc. are also seen. (See chart).

Saveri used in Kathakali is generally seen to be in slow tempo and seems to go well with the mood of bhakti. However, two comparatively fast padam-s also came up in the list available for study.

One of them, *Sriman krpayaa* in Sriramapattabhishekam, is sung when Bharata is astonished to see a Brahmin (Lord Hanuman in disguise) coming to stop him from suicide. Here the mood is adbhuta or astonishment.

In the other fast padam, *Padmaramana vibho* the scene is the arrival of the dutiful Garuda (vehicle of lord Vishnu) ready to take his lord to war against the demon Narakaasura. Here the mood of the scene is dutiful bhakti. In both these padam-s one can see the effective use of Saveri in fast tempo, preserving the mood and spirit of the scene.

All the three octaves are touched in Saveri alapana in Kathakali Sangeetam. Even rishabham is taken as graha swara in the alapana, which is not commonly seen in Carnatic music. Shloka rendition concentrates on madhya sthayi and tara sthayi, while giving an occasional faint touch to mandara sthayi. Surprisingly, mandara sthayi is not touched at all in the padam-s analysed here.

Strict adherence to the grammar of Carnatic music is absent in Kathakali Sangeetam. It is often seen that the sanchara framework of Saveri in Carnatic music is not strictly obeyed.

Incorporation of sanchara-s or phrases from other raga-s, without compromising the bhava of the padam, is a notable speciality of Kathakali Sangeetam. This could (arguably) happen with or without the knowledge of the musician. It is true that many Kathakali musicians may not have a Carnatic music background. But those musicians who have a strong Carnatic music knowhow also seem to borrow phrases from other raga-s. On inquiry into this matter, stalwarts like the late Sankaran Embrandiri have insisted that while rendering a verse in Kathakali, stress is given to the

bhava of the verse rather than the exact swarasthana-s of the raga used for that verse. Thus sanchara-s (to a very limited extent) may tend to deviate to another raga which is not objectionable in Kathakali Sangeetam as long as the mood of the verse is not affected.

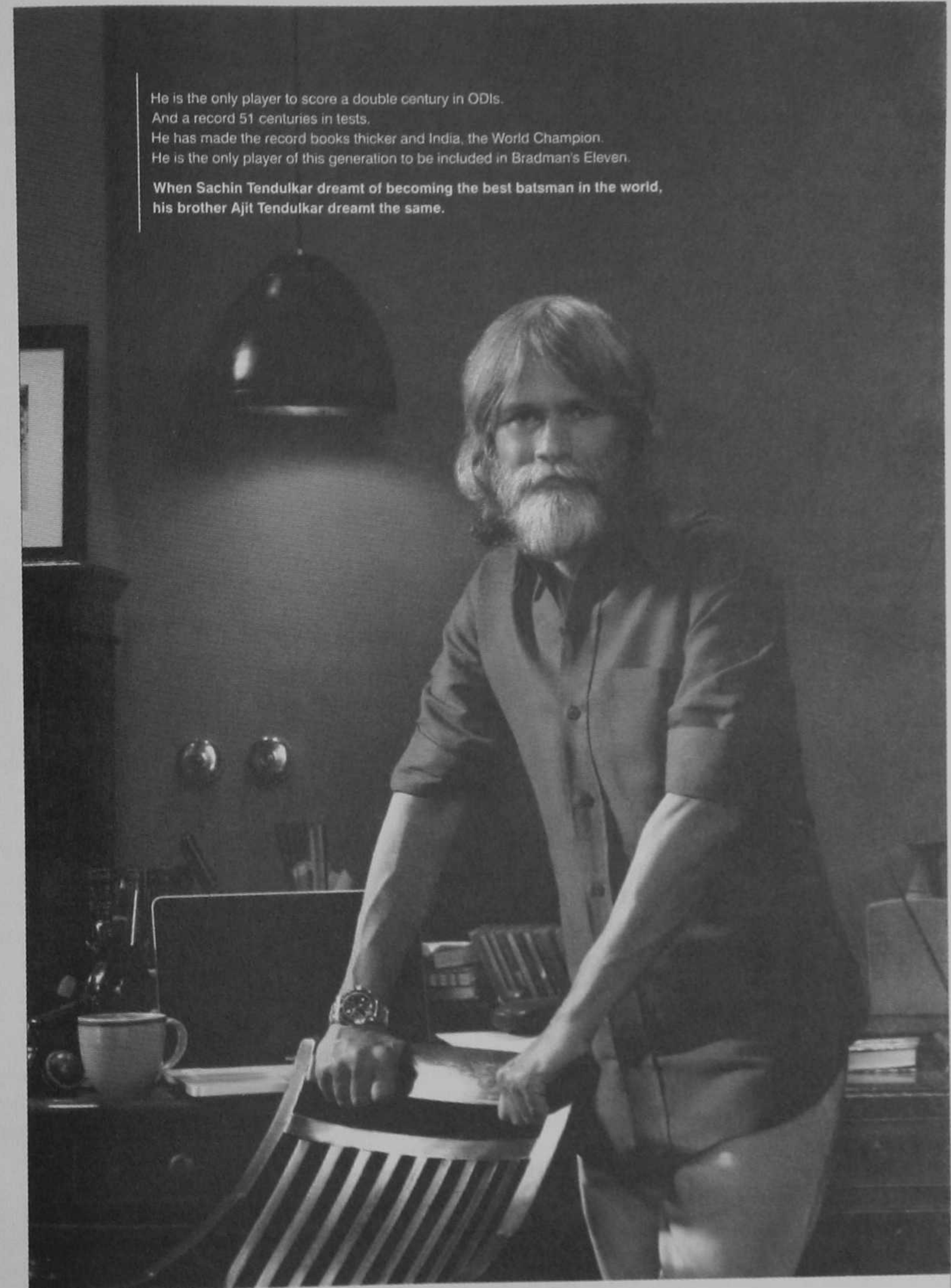
Please see the chart below:

Saveri in Kathakali Sangeetam

Si. No.	Shlokam / Padam	Katha	Talam	Bhava/ Rasa	Artist
1.	Sriman Krpayaa (padam)	Srirama Pattabhishekam	Muriyatantha	Adbhutam Santosham	Kalamandalam Rajendran
2.	Muninaathanmare (padam)	Harischandra Charitam	Champata	Bhakti Santosham	Kalamandalam Rajendran
3.	Kamalaja Bhava (Shlokam)	Narakaasura Vadham	N A	Bhakti	Kalamandalam Rajendran
4.	Padmaramana Vibho (padam)	Narakaasura Vadham	Muriyatantha	Dutifulness Bhakti	Kalamandalam Rajendran
5.	Paritoshamettam (padam)	Dakshayagam	Tripata	Bhakti Aadaram	Kalanilayam Unnikrishnan
6.	Paramapurushanevam (Shlokam)	Santanago palam	N A	N A (since it is an introductory verse)	Kalanilayam Unnikrishnan
7.	Sriman sakhe (padam)	Santanago palam	Champata	Bhakti	Kalanilayam Unnikrishnan
8.	Hara! Hara! (Shlokam)	Kiraatam	N A	Bhakti Adbhutam	Kalanilayam Babu
9.	Arika hamsame (padam)	Nalacharitam-1 st day	Tripata	Santosham	Kalanilayam Babu

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Nada Yoga and Raga Chikitsa: The Two Eyes of Indian Music Therapy

Dr. T. V. Sairam

'In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God' – The Bible

Ancient and primitive human societies across the world had interpreted life and lived with more compassion and reverence than what we find in today's world. Even the concepts and practices relating to healing were thus broad-based. There was hardly any emphasis on a symptom-based treatment or symptomatic cure. As means adopted were valued as important as the end-results, prevention was considered far better than cure. So, the emphasis in ancient systems of medicine such as Ayurveda was more on the prophylactic role of a medicine – rather than on its therapeutic significance.

The human body was never taken for its 'face value'. It was to be regarded much more than a mere bag of bones. It was treated as a wondrous cage that housed a 'dweller', called variously as the 'inner being', 'antahkarna', 'soul', 'atman', 'consciousness', 'nada' etc.

Thus there were two sides of all human existence: gross and subtle. Knowing the subtle (non-physical and un-manifested) was considered as important as knowing the gross (physical and manifested) world. Similarly, any illness or its possible cures had to be interpreted from the point of view of gross physical body and the subtle non-physical elements which included mind and consciousness.

Human intelligence which forms the subtle 'inner personality' of human beings also occupied pride of place. It was firmly believed that subtle but powerful human qualities such as thinking and feeling can lead a person either to grace or to his/her grave – and hence they need to be reflected and acted upon. This necessity was the mother of invention of a system called yoga.

Derived from the Sanskrit 'yuj', which means 'to unite', yoga refers to a union (or integration) of all human aspects from the subtle and innermost force that drives the 'human vehicle' to all external influences that create, grow, nurture and end them. The 'union' referred here refers not only to the intra-harmonization (of one's body, mind and spirit) but also inter-harmonization between human species on one hand and the humans and their environment on the other.

Yoga

Yoga is a time-tested esoteric concept and a 5000-year old practice that has 'overpowered' and 'lulled' the people in their challenging hours. It is supposed to be the gentlest of all methods that tames one's ego so as to develop a more realistic concern and fellow-feelings towards all other lives on this planet.

According to the sage Patanjali (circa 200 BC), the codifier of the yoga system, the practice of yoga destroys the impurities of the body and mind, after which maturity in intelligence and wisdom radiate from the core of the being to function in unison with the body, senses, mind, intelligence and consciousness. Baxter Bell, one of the recent writers on yoga, calls yoga as a sly, clever way of short-circuiting the mental pattern that causes anxiety.

Nada Yoga

Nada yoga, an integral part of the yoga system, asserts that the Universe is a projection of sound vibrations. Different sound frequencies recall different levels of one's existence – physical,

energetic, mental, supra-mental and blissful (ananda) – from gross to subtle as one starts transcending (or expanding) one's awareness.

The system also aims at developing a spontaneous interaction between sound and consciousness. According to this system, nada (intonation or a sound vibration) can be grossly physical (ahata) or sublimated to the subtle realms of the mind (anahata). The system consists of methodologies of penetration of nada into the deeper layers of one's consciousness. This enables the practitioner to experience and remain oriented towards the finer realms in life that promise contentment or happiness.

Nada yogic exercises address the various energy-centers (chakras) in the human body through the natural sound vibrations in breath and also certain musical frequencies, obtained from instruments such as singing bowl, conch shell, drums, bells and gongs. An important exercise of synchronizing chakrasthanas (the location of chakras) with swarasthanas (the locations of musical notes) is a time-tested method, aimed at overcoming adverse and traumatic situations in one's life.

Nada: An Acoustemological Approach

Acoustemology refers to focusing one's attention to the primacy of sound as a modality of knowing and being in the world and to explore the reflexive and historic relationship between hearing and speaking, listening and sounding. In this context, the Sanskrit term 'nada' is interpreted more generously than the English word 'sound', which is restricted only to the actual hearing capacity of human beings. Nada not only includes the acoustic sound sensation, familiar to our faculty of hearing, but also the spontaneous psychic sound sensations 'heard' during meditative practices. As sound is intrinsically linked to consciousness in Indian philosophical traditions, the term 'nada' also refers to a flow of consciousness. The yogis visualize it as a thread-like link between the material and spiritual realms of one's existence. The traditions recognize the following four levels of consciousness:

Para, 'the ultimate'

The highest, farthest and absolute of all sound sensations, Para is interpreted variously: the 'inner silence', the 'root sound', the 'sound potential'. The subtlest form of sound, it is equated with the transcendental state of consciousness, considered divine and sacred. The nearest example as identified in modern brain-waves research to this state of consciousness is unconscious mind. It is represented by the delta brain waves (with lowest frequencies of 0.1 to 4 Hz).

Pashyanti, 'that which can be seen'

A subconscious visual state, which is considered to harbour the power of will (ichcha shakti), it represents a sound sensation, 'heard' in a dream-like state of consciousness. It is the causal energy state of creative movement, as it is intuitively connected to the object of contemplation. The probable brain wave rhythmic pattern here lies somewhere between delta and theta (4-7 Hz).

Madhyama, the Intermediate Level

A dream-like (swapna) state, characterized by a subtle, psychic body (sukshma sharira), it refers to finer and unexpressed sound – as in whispers. More a 'mental speech', this state is associated

with the power of knowledge. The state can be corresponding to the theta/ alpha (7-14 Hz) categories of brainwave pattern.

Vaikhari, the Acoustic Sound

It represents a wakeful state (jagrat) in which physical body takes charge of the control of life-processes. It exhibits the power of action (kriya shakti). It may correspond to the beta wave pattern (13-40 Hz).

Nada Yoga Methodologies

Some of the practices involving nada are discussed below:

Nadopasana (Nada, Intonation + Upasana, worship)

Listening repeatedly to the 'inner sound' as a part of contemplative exercise during meditation has been a time-tested method.

Nada Anusandhana (Cultivation of Inner Sound)

This rigorous practice makes use of sound vibrations and harmonics, emanating from chants and prayers.

Nadabrahma or Divine Nada Meditation

Here an inner balancing of body and mind is sought to be achieved through humming and hand movements. Humming creates certain subtle vibratory sensations within the body. The practitioner visualizes a hollow vessel being filled up by such humming. Even long after the humming is over, the vessel is visualized to echo all the humming vibrations back to the practitioner. For this echo-sensation, one is advised a restful position (shavasana) for a few minutes.

Nadanadi Shakti (The Energy Current of Sound)

Aum or Om is the loved and adored divine vibration (Bija mantra) comparable to the 'Hum' of the Tibetans, 'Amin' of the Muslims and 'Amen' of the Christians. Paramahansa Yogananda calls it as the 'vibration of the cosmic motor'. A symbol of super-consciousness that prevails all over the Universe, Aum is also employed in ancient healing practices. By chanting this vibration every day, it is believed that one increases the body's supply of cosmic energy. The practitioner learns not only to increase its supply in his body but also is able to transmit it as a healing force to those zones of his being (body, mind and soul) which need to be replenished or repaired.

Nadi Shuddhi (Purification of Energy Channels)

Also known as 'nadi shodhana', the purification is done here by infusing more oxygen into the energy channels and eliminating all traces of carbon-dioxide. Various forms of breathing techniques are used to achieve this objective. This purification helps in sharpening one's mind-power (concentration or dharana) and paves way for meditation (dhyana).

Nama Sankeertana (Chanting in Praise of the Divinity)

Group singing and chanting – usually in praise of the Universal Being is a traditional healing approach. The (almost) endless repetition of selected phrases (usually the names of God) set to

simple iterative tunes – at times accompanied by movements or dance- has helped generations of people in overcoming stress in daily life.

Raga Chikitsa (Treatment with Raga)

A raga is a unique sequence of selected musical notes, which are capable of changing the mood of the listeners. It renders great creative scope for endless improvisation. Depending on its nature, a raga could intensify one's feelings. While rendering a raga, the performer simply selects a ground note, which serves as the drone.

Nada Centre for Music Therapy (www.nada.in), a Chennai-based not-to-profit organization, has been engaged in the study of various ragas with the help of a group of volunteers, drawn from musicians, musicologists, music psychologists, music therapists, medical and paramedical professionals since the year 2004.

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FORM IV

(See Rule 8 of Press & Registration of Book Act)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Place of Publication | : | Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha (Regd.) |
| 2. Periodicity of Publication | : | Quarterly |
| 3. Printer's Name & Address | : | Concise Graphics & Marketing
Asthvinayak Bldg., Shop No. 8,
Chinchpokli, Mumbai - 400012 |
| 4. Publisher's Name | : | Shri V. S. Amarnath Sury
169/3 Owners' House, Sion (E),
Mumbai - 400022 |
| 5. Editor's Name | : | Smt. Radha Namboodiri |
| Nationality | : | Indian |
| Address | : | Flat No. 2 Shivalaya, 70, Shivaji Park,
Dadar (W), Mumbai - 400028. |
| 6. Name and Address of individuals who | : | Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha |
| Own the Newspaper and Partners or | : | Sabha (Regd.) |
| Share-holder Holding More than | : | 292, Comrade Harbanslal Marg, |
| One percent of the capital | : | Sion (East), Mumbai - 400022 |

I, V. S. Amarnath Sury, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Michael, Mozart, Muthuswamy

Shyamala Sajhani

"The taalam strings are slightly off key, check it up", I told my student (name withheld for obvious reasons), while I proceeded to fine-tune my Veena in readiness for the next class.

It was a lazy afternoon, plenty of sunlight, chirping of the birds and a soft breeze keeping good company. An ideal time for an ideal class the same as any other time or any other class. Every class holding a different interest, a different challenge, except that I was not entirely prepared for the challenges this class held.

"Ma'am, can you teach me something new", my student asked me enthusiastically. Nothing out of ordinary, this is a common request made by students, sometimes (with some) to hide the fact that they have not practised the previous lessons and are pretty lost at the moment. But it is a harmless request and not one to create anxiety. "Do you have anything in mind" I asked innocently, not quite prepared for the answer. This girl had shown interest in tillanas, I was thinking of a likely tillana when she threw the bomb at me. "Ma'am, I would like to learn either *Beat it* or *Billie Jean* by Michael Jackson".

My eyebrows shot up "What???". The request had not sunk in fully. "Why? What???", I was repeating myself stupidly.

"Ma'am, I just thought that I should do something different this time, not the same old songs". Thankfully, the words had sunk in and the reaction was setting in. I drew in a deep breath mentally debating how best to tackle the problem at hand.

"Michael Jackson", I smiled, "Yes, I have been a fan of his". The girl warmed up, "Yeah Ma'am, but I am not a big fan of his". She was not making any sense to me, "He is a great performer", I found myself defending a great artiste forgetting the import of the situation.

"No, Ma'am, actually I have not heard him much".

"Oh, then why do you want to learn to play his songs". I was genuinely interested and puzzled all at once.

"I was watching TV Ma'am and heard someone playing his songs on the Veena, I thought it was a great change".

Time to take a deep breath again, I took my own time to do it. On an impulse I picked the Veena up and played "P Pa -G Ga - P Pa - G Ga - Pa P P P- Da P -Da Pa ;; ;" - panchamam, sadharana gandharam and chatushruti dhaivatam. Three notes in all, no gamakams, no bhavam, no meaning, no sense.

"You mean this", I asked her, "this is *Beat it*".

"It seems so easy Ma'am". It was her turn to look puzzled.

"What did you expect", I asked her.

"I somehow thought it would be more difficult Ma'am".

"I could make it more difficult, I could wear leather pants, jacket and boots and dance as I play, now

that would be difficult".

"No Ma'am, as Veena artistes we cannot do all that".

I was thrilled, she understood. Somehow I did not want to belittle her request, which was inspired by someone she had seen on TV.

"If you can play Sarali Varisai, you can play this song. You do not need anyone to teach you this".

"It sounded different on TV Ma'am".

"Yes, I am sure", I said, "for it to sound good it needs supporting music like an orchestra backing, without which it will sound empty. On TV there must have been an orchestra backing it up".

"Yes Ma'am, there was", she was happy that I knew all about it. "It sounded great".

I would like to add here that I am actually a great fan of Michael Jackson who was a fabulous artiste and performer. This article is not written with the intention of even the least of ill will towards him. He was the King of Pop, the problem is of a more serious nature, I teach Karnataka (traditional, simple, pure) Sangeeta, not pop.

It was not until two of my students requested, with all earnestness, that it hit me. Michael Jackson and Elton John, along with a host of others are here to stay, rubbing shoulders with the likes of our great trinity.

"Is it possible for you to set aside geetams for a while, and concentrate just on songs of Elton John, besides a few guitar leads?" another girl pleaded.

These two girls were ignorant of each other's existence; I would have cried conspiracy otherwise. Worse, mutiny against the teacher.

Before I say anything else, I must admit, that I too have been an extremely adventurous person. I have tried playing on the Veena, other genres of music as well. Mainly western classical, I had managed to learn a Beethoven piece by heart when I was in school and later one of Bach's. This was because of absolute curiosity. I also tried playing Blues on the Veena, besides having performed so-called Jazz during my college days with a few very popular musicians, whose names are not relevant for this article. Now, I am pursuing Hindustani classical lessons, which I apply on the Veena.

I would like to say a few introductory words about these respective genres firstly and their application on the Veena, before I proceed to make my point.

I consider myself blessed for having tried these genres, for one reason mainly, which is, yes, they have indeed widened my horizons and also my appreciation and understanding (to a decent extent only, for to completely understand them, it is a lifetime study) of these genres.

I have great respect for western classical music; it is complex and beautiful all at once. Our Indian classical music is based on note progression, whereas, the occidental music is based on chord progression. That is the reason why we have such a strong melody base as against the great harmonies of the west, which have the melody backed with a bass as well.

It is possible to play on the Veena only the melody of any great symphony and it is not possible to bring out the grandeur of a Bach, Mozart or a Beethoven composition without the necessary harmonious backing. Yes, I did manage a few chords as well with the Beethoven piece but even to my young ears it was obvious that, the only place for it to be played was at home, with my mother smiling indulgently at me, it simply was not enough to match the orchestral set up.

Blues is that form of music that evolved during the phase of slavery in America, when the Africans who were brought forcibly as slaves to America, were made to pick cotton. While picking cotton they would sadly sing and that style of singing was later on adapted as the Blues. It is so called because of the sad (blue) nature of the soulful renditions. The advent of Rock and Roll and the incorporation of the Blues into it made the genre world-famous. Now Blues is played with great enjoyment. This particular genre can be learned with a great deal of exposure to the style, great deal of practice and the right feel. If the right feel is not there, you could be hitting the right notes but still cannot claim to be playing Blues. There are many great legends, fabulous artistes belonging to this genre, my favorites are B.B. King, Jimi Hendricks, Eric Clapton and above all Buddy Guy who had even performed in Mumbai.

I once heard Buddy Guy hit just one note. In our music we call it Kaishiki Nishadam. That was the first note he played on his guitar and he held it for at least two bars (count of eight). I have never heard a note take life and resonate as it did in his hands. These are great, true musicians who were, above all, sincere to what they played, loved what they played and their love and life shone through the notes they played. Our Shuddha Dhanyasi comes closest to the Blues scale with a touch of prati madhyamam once in a way and a touch of chatushruti dhaivatam.

Jazz, as I had mentioned earlier, is something I never really played on the Veena. That is the reason for the comment I had made earlier saying, "so-called Jazz". As my understanding grew, I realized that Jazz is not at all easy to pick up; it takes years and years of training to play it at a professional level. The progression is very different; in the sense, the chords and the rhythm do not follow the regular path that we are used to. Yet, it is one of the most enjoyable forms of music to listen to. It could be soft Jazz, contemporary Jazz, or classical Jazz, which is a little heavier on the ear and they are all great to listen to. Pat Metheny is the Jazz artiste I have been listening to a lot of late. Chic Correa is one of the best Jazz Pianists ever in my opinion.

And then you have the lovely salsa, classical Spanish music, Celtic (Irish); no matter what we pick, it is the classical that is always more difficult in technique. The others need a great deal of feel, exposure and practice.

Coming to the most famous of all, western popular music, one can compare it to the popular music of India which would be filmi music, light music, no, not of the Bhajan or Abhang kind, as they are devotional. Here one has to stress and say that the popular music is of essentially the non-devotional kind.

Western popular music has seen some great bands, The Beatles, Elvis Presley (he indulged a lot in Rock and Roll and Blues), Carpenters, Bee Gees, the legendary Abba, Madonna (she has stuck around for three decades as a singer which is no small feat), Michael Jackson (Pop King, Pop Icon), Elton John, we can go on and on.

Bands like Metallica (my favorite) and Iron Maiden cannot be referred to as Pop bands as they are Hard Metal bands. They are different. The fan following for such bands are phenomenal, and please be informed that if you announce a concert of Hard Metal and by mistake add even a hint of pop music or anything else soft, you are asking for trouble as the fans do not take to it kindly at all. All I can say is that, it is the organizer, who would in such a situation be blamed, for not respecting the sentiments of the Hard Metal fans.

I have till date not heard any of these above-mentioned names/bands venture close to Karnataka music, but many Karnataka musicians have attempted either successfully or unsuccessfully some of these genres mentioned above.

What I did not anticipate was the preference of Michael Jackson over Muthaiya Bhagavata. Unknown to unsuspecting artistes and teachers, the phase two is slowly beginning. The phase two of spoon feeding or "make it easier for me" phase; "I have no time to figure out anything for myself", "I am busy, so please teach me to play *Billy Jean* and *Beat it* by Michael Jackson, I will learn *Banturiti Koluvu* and *Brovabharama* later" phase.

This was my reply to both of these students. Veena as an instrument is designed to express melodic tunes. The tonal quality of the Veena is unmatched and the gamaka can be rendered most convincingly on a Veena.

It is all right to try what one pleases, based on their own effort on the Veena, but at the same time one needs to remember that we have a certain responsibility towards our instruments, our music, our culture and society. So long as we are Indian musicians we owe it to Indian Music no matter which part of the world we go to. We should be proudly presenting our culture to the rest of the world, rather than completely bidding farewell to our style of music and adapting to popular, easier to play music. To play a tough Mozart piece on the Veena may be technically challenging, but once again the choice is between doing acrobatics on the Veena or bringing out the best of what the Veena is capable of, namely, the rich qualities of Gamakam, Talam and Suswaram.

I would like to retell a story here, which may not be related to music but is of relevance. Once a great saint of India was walking past a river when a man came and boasted to him about how he spent almost 20 years of his life to attain a power whereby he can walk on water. He then proceeded to demonstrate. The saint instead of reacting or commenting requested him to wait for some time because he had some urgent work on the other shore. He hired a boatman, paid him two rupees and went to the other side of the river, finished his work and came back.

After coming back he spoke to the man with the power to walk on water. The saint said, "For the deed I needed to spend just 2 rupees on, you wasted 20 years of your life. What a waste, the years could have been spent on self-realization instead". That is a lofty goal yes. But one can see the parallel, imagine spending years to play Mozart on the Veena which does not even showcase the best of the instrument. You can use it to do what Saint Tyagaraja said, couple it with Bhakti and such music brings forth true rewards of bliss.

Are you being true to the instrument of your choice? Are you bringing out the best of what the instrument is capable of rendering, to the best of your ability? If not, then why play it? A simple synthesizer can do the trick.

I told my student this, if you want to play Elton John today because people understand it better and not a kriti by Dikshitar, then what if people ask you to play a song, which was a popular item number in films (no disrespect to item numbers, once again, they are not easy to make). Will you then say goodbye to Shyama Shastri's kritis to play this. To what extent are you willing to change to please people, where will all this stop.

Your cash box may jingle more by belting out popular numbers. It is okay to play what you feel like, when you want, but to popularize Veena based on filmi and western popular music alone is actually doing disservice to our art, culture and society.

In the history of music, all kinds of artistes and performers have come and gone. How is it that only

our Karnataka Kritis have withstood time? In the west how is it that only Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and the like have withstood time. The answer is so simple. It is because all this music was directed to God and devotion. Karnataka music was sung to our deities in our beautiful temples here, the western classical symphonies were composed for the churches. What is permanent begets permanence.

Try and sing a *Paalinchu Kaamaakshi* comfortably, and then I would say, wow! well done. For the bhavam in the song is not easily achieved.

Ultimately, life is made of choices. You can choose to please the world, please X, Y, Z. Or please yourself; please the truth that is in the instrument of your choice. It is not about what is right or wrong. It is about which way are you headed; towards the truth and permanence as sung by our saints or towards commercialization and compromise. To make a choice is okay and to go where it takes you is okay. I cannot but feel for all that our music has stood for and silently pray that there will always be people who will carry forward the tradition, and also that there will always be students who are sensitive enough to understand the finer and richer qualities of our kritis.

I must not forget to add that, these girls came back to me for the next class and happily learnt a kriti and geetam respectively.

"Veena vadana tatvagna sruti jaati visharadaha |
Taalagnaschaprayasena Mokshamarga Niyachati ||"

-Yagnavalkya in his Smriti 3, which means:

"One who is versed in Veena play, one who is adept in the varieties of shrutis (subtle quarter-tones and micro-tones) and one who is adept in taala, all of them attain salvation without effort."



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Future of classical dance in Karnataka

Araty Shetty

The word future indicates a present for the next generation. The next generation of dancers is already working towards that future. What is past for the current generation was the present for senior dancers. So the future is just a reflection of the changes that have happened over the past and are happening currently and the trends reflecting the changes to come.

I will reflect on the changes in trends that have happened in the field of classical dance, and they will reflect the future trends in dance.

Dance can be looked at in terms of

- 1) **The physical movement and the ideas presented through these movements.**
- 2) **Stress on the theory, an academic aspect of dance.**
- 3) **Changes in the trends in Aharya, or the costuming in dance.**
- 4) **The lyrical and literary content of music used in dance.**

Let us look at the **first point** under different headings:

Repertoire:

Dance in Karnataka has had a rich past. Even before its present formal structure, the Mysore style has been replete with classicism and adherence to tradition. The advent of the Tanjore quartet in the court of the Wodeyars, propagated the margam format of Bharatanatyam, and compositions in Telugu and Tamil were introduced. Swati Tirunal's residence and influence introduced a different flavor of music for Bharatanatyam.

Owing to the dictates of the British rule over India, dance presentations also diluted their emphasis on intense shringara with bhakti shringara. This is reflected in the inclusion of devaranamas from dasa sahitya, shlokas, churnike and Basava vachanas. It has now come to include women poets like Halavanakatte Giriyamma's compositions which even though were composed several years ago have very contemporary themes.

In terms of the varnams, Guru Dandayudapani Pillai composed varnams like *Karunai nee seyyavendume* in raga Natakuranji and Adi tala. This varnam can be interpreted as bhakti pradhana laced with shringara. *Annayai Maravenadi* in raga Abhogi and Adi tala, expresses love and respect of a child towards his or her parents. This was a very contemporary theme for a varnam and a definite shift from the regular nayika-nayaka bhava of a varnam. The current trend questions the premise of the varnam itself, the argument being that the interspersed jatis and swarams take away from the sthaya of a varnam thereby making it difficult to evoke a high level of rasa in the audience. Sustaining audience interest through the performance of a varnam itself has become questionable. The current and future trends are looking at colouring the adavus of a jati with the sthaya bhavam of the varnam, thereby softening them or making them shorter. The other aspect is to use the chittaiswarams of a varnam to portray continuity in the abhinaya, portraying the sancharis apt to the situation, as opposed to usage of adavus. Shri Dhananjayan has adapted the varnam *Chinni Krishna* in raga Athana into this format successfully.

Blending of unique styles:

In the past, each classical art form had a distinct identity of its own. Bharatanatyam could be definitely identified from say Odissi or Kuchipudi. Dr. Padma Subramanyam's research and thesis

proves that all dance forms are related and watching the karanas proves that Odissi movements and Bharatanatyam movements were all a part of the same art. What we saw exclusively as Odissi will now be seen as a prescribed movement in the Natyashastra that can be borrowed into any style by the future generations. Why, even Bollywood dancing might allow for borrowing from classical art, because some scholars have allowed Bollywood movements to be classified as movements from Natyashastra. From that perspective there is a definite borrowing of one art form from the other. For example, Kathak dancers are working on a loose format of a margam for their performances, which did not exist earlier.

Karnataka has also been very tolerant and encouraging of alternate art forms thriving in the state. Starting with Kathak, Karnataka has seen schools that train in Kuchipudi, Odissi and prominent schools that train in contemporary dance and even Bollywood. Students of dance cross-train in these dance forms. Putting these ideas together makes me wonder if with academic education and theories of dance that are coming up, in the future will there be blurring of lines between all our classical arts, and going in the reverse gear, will desi forms start getting a more margi flavour?

Conscious physical fitness

The above being the fear, there are also positive aspects to the development of dance like conscious physical fitness. Since there is a restraint in time spent on the actual training, vyayama is not a part of the regular training methodology. Students of dance are training instead, in Kalaripayattu, a martial art and also working out at gymnasiums to cross-train. Physical appearance on stage was not much of an issue as compared to the experience of a dancer, but now keeping a fit body is very much in vogue.

Standardization of technique is another noticeable shift. When we watch movies or videos of Ram Gopal and other dancers, a little wavering of angashuddha was not noticed when compared to the rasa evoked in the dance. Nowadays even young performers are expected to have araimandis and perfect angashuddha.

Move from solo performance to group presentations is gaining strength as we watch. Group performances were limited to dance dramas; now margam formats are also choreographed as group dances. There are two reasons that we can definitely identify as a reason for this shift - the first one being, the stages and opportunities are bigger, for example the festivals like Dasara, Karavali Utsav, Alvas Viraasat, Kadambotsav all command an audience of over three to four thousand people and the stage is so huge that it does not lend itself to a solo performance. We need a minimum of twenty dancers to even make an impact.

Artistes of yesteryears had the unique capacity to hold an audience for over two hours. Now, in general, even with time constraint, we are not sure whether today's practitioners are unable to sustain audience interest in a solo recital because the student has not put in enough effort to cultivate the art to this level or the teacher has not been able to nurture a student to this level.

Neo-classical and contemporary presentations of dance with classical themes as a base:

Varied rasas are picked for portrayal. Although initial training is given to dancers in the traditional vyayama, adavu and margam format, dancers who choose to take performing seriously are deviating from the traditional format to the presentation of thematic productions even for solo recitals. They explore different themes and very modern concepts like the position of women in today's society, including topics like dowry harassment etc.

Mythological characters are also interpreted in current social situations lending different hues to the characters. For instance, Sita, as portrayed in our scriptures, was the embodiment of strength, protecting her dharma as a wife; there is a contemporary interpretation wherein she is portrayed as the long-suffering woman who fails to demand justice. Another instance would be Draupadi, the strength behind the Pandavas, a woman who was capable of loving five men with extraordinary abilities equally and a great devotee of Krishna; a different interpretation of her is as a woman who, despite having five powerful husbands, was wronged in the court of the Kurus.

In the past, scriptures were used to extol qualities of characters and set examples that we could follow in our daily life. Present and future trends reflect the issues of society through these same characters. Dance is taking on more a flavour of an extraneous journey rather than an internal one.

This change can be attributed to the **second point**.

During the era when dancers learnt from nattuvanars, they were taught at most some hastas and a few shlokas from the Natyashastra. More stress was on the practical aspect of the dance. With the advent of state-level exams and their popularity, children have been taught more history and theory of dance. Earlier, the student presented what was taught by the teacher for several years before the student could add something original to the composition. The current and future trends are leaning towards dancers beginning to compose as they learn and teach as they perform. The distinction between a teacher and a Guru is blurring by the day not lending itself to a healthy trend. A Guru was a complete artiste, an expert in literary, music and dance aspects who could mentor a student while teaching the art and cultivating solo performing artistes. On the other hand, young aspirants of dance who teach bring fresh perspective to the art and stress more on theoretical knowledge and a logical explanation for what is presented in a dance.

This is what inspired my doctoral thesis on curriculum development in the training for classical dance. The control group of students learnt in the traditional format and the experimental group learnt using the Harbation steps of education (an academic concept based on the simple-to-complex theory) where they were given the history of the art and taught in detail the logical steps in the learning of the art. Although the first group that learnt traditionally progressed faster initially, the experimental group sustained interest in the learning process longer. What was surprising about the result was that when both groups were mixed and tested for excellence in learning, even though the examiners who were traditionalists did not know who belonged to what group, they picked people from the experimental group with the theoretical background as better students. Now that this is a proven fact, as opposed to the past where there were few books on the art to throw light on the history, educating more people about our art form will create knowledgeable writers, art historians, and people who can validate the documentation of art history. Art education in the future will transcend into schools and colleges. For example - B.A. in Dance with other academic options, P.G. Diploma in dance offered by the Mangalore university, M.A. and doctoral degrees by other Universities.

The third point, music for dance, has also considerably changed. Lines were drawn earlier about the types of instruments used for a particular style of dance. Presently the use of the keyboard and drum pads has become a universal fixture irrespective of what dance form is being presented. Also with western influences and global influences and exposure to all forms of music, as long as there is a recognisable rhythm any form of dance is composed to any form of music. Michael Jackson using Odissi dancers in his music video is an example. If Michael Jackson can do that, then what will prevent our dancers composing to their music? In a world of remixes and young vaggeyakaras with brilliant minds, fusion being the future of dance is not far from reality.

The **fourth point** Aharya has evolved from nine yard sarees and dhotis to stitched costumes whose influence came from films. U.S. Krishna Rao and Chandrabagha Devi and Ram Gopal were pioneers in experimental costuming. Earlier, hairdos and jewellery were elaborate since there was royal patronage. Use of jewellery has been considerably reduced in quantity as well as quality. Costuming has evolved with the times and there are now economical yet tasteful options in color and use of material. Creative tailoring and costume designing has evolved as a new profession. There is a change from fresh flowers to plastic and paper options. There is more stress on visual appeal and comfort rather than on definition of what costuming should be. There is character costuming in dance dramas through makeup and use of colored stoles and dupattas.

There is a blurring of distinction between art forms in terms of Aharya too. A Kathak lehenga with a Bharatanatyam melakku, is quite acceptable these days in group performances as also wearing pathan salwars with a melakku for contemporary Bharatanatyam recitals.

Conclusion As traditional dancers working within a framework, as dancers and teachers, what should our responsibility be towards dance in the future? Should we stress on keeping the identity of each dance form separate? Or be more acceptable of intrusion of other forms? What are we lacking in cultivating national-level solo performing artistes in greater numbers? Should we bond as a dance community irrespective of individual styles and mentor with a greater open-mindedness? Where does creativity end and stagnation begin? How much corruption can we allow in a classical art form and still have it defined as a classical art? Who decides what a classical art is? What should a target audience be to successfully propagate classical art? Are we in the right direction in creating an educated audience and an efficient line of critics and sponsors to support classical art? These are some questions to be thought about by our dancing community.

OBITUARY



K. Shivakumar

Bombay K. Shivakumar passed away after a period of illness in his home in Chembur, Mumbai on 22nd April 2012. A popular violinist of Mumbai, he was an A grade artiste of All India Radio in both Carnatic and Hindustani music (he learnt from Ustad Zia Mohiuddin Dagar).

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Lec-dem on Oottukadu Venkata Kavi
by Chitravina N Ravikiran - A Report

Nalini Dinesh



Chitravina N Ravikiran (center), (l to r) K.V. Prasad, Anahita Ravindran, Apoorva Ravindran, Nagai Sriram

As part of its new series of special lecture-demonstrations, workshops and concerts by expert musicians, the Bhaktha Rasika Ranjani Sabha, Anushaktinagar, Mumbai, held a lecture-demonstration on the musical legacy of Mahakavi Oottukadu Venkatasubbaier by acclaimed musician, Chitravina N Ravikiran on 2nd June 2012. The lec-dem was informative with appropriate demonstration, thought-provoking, and with the right dose of levity.

Following is a documentation of all that was spoken and sung by Ravikiran. He was provided vocal support by his disciples Anahita and Apoorva. Nagai Sriram and K.V. Prasad provided violin and mridangam support.

Ravikiran began by stating that much of the lec-dem would be based on the book authored by himself, Oottukadu Venkata Kavi Life and Contributions. His learning process about this great composer by no means ended with the writing of the book, it continues to this day. The irony was that Ravikiran literally lived with many great composers (during his intensive tutelage under his father Chitravina Narasimhan), except Venkata Kavi for the first 17 years of his life, except for the ubiquitous *Alai Payuthey*. Only after a chance meeting with a musician Seeta Doraiswamy who mentioned Venkata Kavi's Navavaranam and sang some to him, did the beauty of Venkata Kavi's creations flash on him. In fact, there are only two people in Indian music one remembers in terms of the lyrics carrying the entire weight of the composition even without music - they are Arunagirinathar and Oottukadu Venkata Kavi.

Some of Venkata Kavi's compositions were already popular among dancers and Harikatha exponents, but the Navavaranam presented an entirely different perspective of the composer, the variety of scholarly ragas and talas employed alone point to the composer's genius. To demonstrate, the 5th avarana kriti *Neela Lohita Ramani* is set in Balahamsa (a raga that needs to be learnt with extra diligence) and khanda jati dhruva tala. Of course, Tyagaraja has composed kritis in this raga including *Parulanu* popularised by T.Brinda and which figures in the popular Colonial Cousins album by Hariharan and Leslie Lewis.

In contrast to the usual perception of Venkata Kavi, the kriti is in 2-kalai chowka kala. The kriti is replete with mantric and tantric references including the chakra and yoginis. The flow of sahitya is remarkable. This kriti alone is ample proof for people who doubt if the tunes are Venkata Kavi's own. In the first place, khanda jati dhruva tala would never be the first choice for an average composer, Adi or Rupakam would be the choice for most people. Secondly, the sahitya hugs the

angas of the tala. There are three major types of rhythmic setting that have been employed by vaggeyakaras:

1. Bisection of tala - this was employed by Muthuwamy Dikshitar who used interesting talas in his Navavarana kritis and Vaara kritis.
2. Vishama Yati - random spacing of lyrics.
3. Fitting into angas - this was Venkata Kavi's approach.
<<demonstrates with *Neela Lohita Ramani* >>

The methods of composition correspond to the term "movement of music" that is commonly used in Western classical music.

<<demonstrates the way the lyrics hug the 9+2+9 aksharas of sankeerna jati mattiya tala in the 6th avarana kriti *Sadananda Mayi* in raga *Hindolam* >>

If this kriti were to be set in a 5 or 10 beat tala the lyrics would not fit in well. Thirdly, only a musician of highest calibre can choose *Hindolam* for a chowka kala kriti since it is usually used in an upbeat manner (despite it not having any teevra swaras). The other rhythmic speciality in this kriti is that he has used 2-kalai for pallavi and anupallavi and 1-kalai for charanam.

It is pertinent to remark at this point that there are some popular misconceptions about compositions and composers. Poetic metre or chandas need not be followed in a musical composition; in fact, it could even take away from the musicality if it were to strictly obey rules of metre. While studying or analyzing a composer, one has to take an objective view and not be led by popular sentiment. There is a view that Tyagaraja's Gowla pancharatna kriti *Dudukugala* is not autobiographical and that he did not commit the sins as mentioned in the kriti (him being too noble a person) and was only using it as a ploy to critique society. Tyagaraja and for that matter Purandaradasa have criticised society in an ample number of other kritis (like *Vararagalaya*), so it can be stated as fact that they did not need to resort to indirect methods of critique.

<<Ravikiran and his disciples go on to demonstrate the saptaratnas (which are comparable to the pancharatna kritis of Tyagaraja), one by one>>

The first saptaratna *Bhajanaamrita* in Naattai eulogises a number of great devotees. The first charanam talks about Prahlada, the second charanam salutes Sanaka, Sananda etc, the third charanam is entirely about Hanuman who is described as "Dasharatha rajakumara hitam krita" the one who does good for Rama (Venkata Kavi has also composed a separate set of saptaratnas on Hanuman), another charanam talks about many characters in the Ramayana, the 5th and 8th charanams describe the qualities of a devotee (comparable to *Endaro Mahanubhavulu*), 6th charanam is about devotees of Shiva like Nandeeshha, Matanga, Vyaghrapada etc.

While it is common to find vaggeyakaras eulogising mythological figures, it is rare to find one paying tribute to historical figures; neither Dikshitar nor Shyama Shastri have done so, though Tyagaraja does mention Sarangadeva in the kriti *Vidulaku*. In the 7th charanam, Venkata Kavi mentions many historical figures including Alvars and Nayanmars like Ramanuja, Kulashekhar, Vishnuchitta, Tulasidasa, Manickavasagar, Sundarar, Dindima Kaviraja.

Continuing the surfing of Venkata Kavi's musical ocean, the Paras saptaratna kriti *Aalavadennaalo* is the only Carnatic composition which mentions the names of all the 63 nayanmars and it is the only saptaratna in Tamil. In the charanam, the composer entreats the Lord that he should not be reborn, but if he is, then he should be born like any of the subsequently named people, and then goes on to beautifully weave together the complex names of the Shiva

devotees. The kriti also mentions Tirunalaipovaar (Nandanar). << here Ravikiran compares 6 consecutive tadinginatoms that Venkata Kavi employs, to six sixes in an over in cricket!>>

The 2nd saptaratna in Gowla *Aganita Mahima* is on Vishnu. Some special features in this kriti are: one charanam has 6 avartas, the charanam "Chandra Jatadhara" mentions many rare devotee names like Pippalava, Devana, Saraswata which are found in the Puranic Encyclopaedia; this indicates how familiar Venkata Kavi was with the Puranas.

The saptaratna in Kalyani is entirely on Radha who usually does not figure in Carnatic music literature except in Jayadeva's compositions. Venkata Kavi was greatly inspired by Jayadeva; he has composed an entire kriti on Jayadeva, *Padmavati Ramanam* in Poorvikalyani. Incidentally, many who render this kriti do not sing the pallavi completely "padma pada samanam kuru manasa". Venkata Kavi has composed around 10 songs on Radha. The Sanskrit in the Naattai and Gowla saptaratnas is more scholarly while the Kalyani kriti is full of elegant and graceful words befitting the nature of Radha.

Bala sarasa, the Keeravani saptaratna begins on beat and has another start before beat. The 5th charanam mentions musical technicalities - aahatam and prayaaahatam, the names of gamakas. Venkata Kavi has also mentioned the sapta tala names in another kriti in a very poetic way, the situation is that Krishna is playing the flute and the gopis are keeping time. He wants them to miss the tala, so he plays to very complicated rhythms, but finally has to acknowledge defeat when the gopis do not miss a beat.

The 5th saptaratna *Jatadhara* is also in scholarly Sanskrit. The 4th charanam has names of musical instruments, the last charanam mentions the 5 aspects of Shiva when depicted as Panchaanana (one with 5 faces) - Ishaana, Tatpuruasha, Aghora, Vaamadeva, Sadyojata.

Venkata Kavi has composed tillanas, chindus, 15 songs on the greatness of Guru. <<demonstrates one in Abhogi Parama Yoga>>

Venkata Kavi leads us to believe that Lord Krishna himself was his guru as he states that his glance alone would transmit knowledge, this is possible only with God. <<sings another kriti on Guru, *Enna Punniyam seideno sadgurunatha in Reetigowla*>>

Venkata Kavi's Sindhubhairavi tillana is in Hindustani style and he has used Dwijayavanti (as Dwijavanti raga is called by the Venkata Kavi school) for another tillana; Tanjore was a cultural melting pot in his period under the Nayak and Maratha rule, South Indian musicians benefited in getting a wide exposure to Hindustani music too. A Surati tillana is also well-known. Incidentally, the famous Kalinga nartana tillana is not actually a tillana, it is a nataanga; it has a lot of free verse in addition to the usual dance sollus found in a tillana. << a recording of *Needamangalam Krishnamurthy rendering the Kalinga Nartana nataanga is played*>>

Venkata Kavi also composed chindus and ragamalikas like the Ramayana ragamalika *Shrirama Jayame Jayam* in Nattai, Varaali, Arabhi, Gowla and Manirangu. The mudra of Venkata Kavi occurs only in a few kritis like this one and the last Kamakshi Navavarana kriti in Madhyamavati.

<<Ravikiran demonstrates the Manji chindu Neelavaanam>>

Shlokas like the Ranganatha panchakam and Madhava panchakam have been composed by Venkata Kavi. Wonderful songs have been composed on Muruga; the entire Pranavopadesham episode has been composed in a chindu format in 84 stanzas; before the Pranavopadesham, a song in raga Sama describes a game between Ganesha and Muruga, in which the ball they have been playing with vanishes, and the boys forthwith continue playing with the sun as a ball!

Besides Ghana ragas, rakti ragas and all the major ragas of Carnatic music, rare ragas like Deshakshi, Balahamsa and Kannadamaruvam have also been handled by Venkata Kavi.

Many of Venkata Kavi's popular songs on Krishna are part of a Tamil opera which uses colloquial language and therefore has universal appeal. The Tamil used in this is different from the scholarly Tamil he uses in his other Tamil kritis. He has also composed Kshetra kritis on places like Tiruvarur, Madurai, Kanchi and Chennai (Triplicane, Mylapore etc).

A common complaint about Venkata Kavi's compositions among musicians is that there is too much sahitya and too many madhyama kala passages. This is surely not a fault of the composer; rather, it reflects the weakness of the musicians that they cannot render the sahitya with proper breath control and the desired rakti (which does require enormous practice)! Kshetragna's padams too require tremendous breath control and modulation to render the long and nuanced phrases with the beauty they deserve.

There are 5 discernible styles of composing:

1. Tyagaraja's style.
2. Muthuswamy Dikshitar - more spacing, more plain notes, meditative.
3. Shyama Shastri's style was somewhere in between the above two with other features like beautiful swara-sahitya.
4. Kshetragna
5. Oottukadu Venkata Kavi's style – madhyama kala - based

A different voice culture is required for each of the above styles. A *Chetashri* requires a different approach as compared to a *Darini Telusukonti*. A *Naa Jeevadara* is more akaara-based; if we were to use the same approach for *Chetashri* then it would be akin to "operation success, patient dead"!

Voice culture begins with the mind or brain to interpret the composition properly. If a musician meets these challenges then it is he who benefits with improved musicianship. There is the example of Beethoven in Western classical music whose compositions were difficult to interpret - especially towards his later years; he is said to have retorted to a complaining violinist "What do I care about your wretched fiddle? I am speaking to my God".

Despite the remarkable legacy of Venkata Kavi (as we've seen above), what is the reason behind him not being as popular or well-known as, say, the Trinity? (Many people do harbour the view that the Trinity are a class apart, there can be none to equal them).

There are certain points that need to be kept in mind while analyzing such historical composers:

The term "Trinity" is only an academic or study term, each composer has to be studied on his own right.

1700-1765 is only an indicative period, there are no records available to prove that Venkata Kavi indeed lived in this period; in the case of the Trinity there are some court records to indicate the period in which they lived. We can only guess the period in which Venkata Kavi lived from his contemporaries like Bhaskararaya and Sarabhoji Raja.

The Trinity was popular because of shishya parampara. Thyagaraja's shishya paramparas are of course well-known - Manambuchavadi, Wallajapet, Patnam Subramanya Iyer, Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar etc. A shishya parampara can be a double-edged sword especially if they are also

composers in their own right; they may add more touches to the kriti, not for one-upmanship but to satisfy their musical urges. In Dikshitar and Shyama Shastri kritis, there are strong indications that many sangatis, which did not find a place in the original composition, were added. The above is true even in the case of Tyagaraja, for instance, *Ninnuvina Namadendu* has been thrust with so many sangatis that do not necessarily suit the reflective mood of the kriti.

Even among the Trinity, it is Tyagaraja who is most influential, from January to December it is only his aradhana which is being celebrated, not Dikshitar's or Shyama Shastri's! This might be to do with the fact that Tyagaraja's kritis are easy to learn and teach, and it is compared to Draksha rasa. How many Dikshitar songs can be taught to a primary level student except those which constituted his experiments with western band music like *Shakti sahita Ganapatim*? In fact, ironically, Subbarama Dikshitar has recorded that lazy musicians who do not practise properly, complain that Shyama Shastri kritis are difficult and this was 2 centuries ago!

The family of Venkata Kavi closely guard his compositions and do not easily share them with outsiders. In fact according to beliefs prevalent then, many original manuscripts were drowned in the river after copies were made. Needamangalam Krishnamurthy was the rebel in the family who ran away from Kumbakonam to Chennai and popularized Venkata Kavi's kritis.

Around 300-400 compositions of Venkata Kavi are available to us. Original manuscripts of Shyama Shastri which are available also have about 300 compositions but many of them do not have notations.

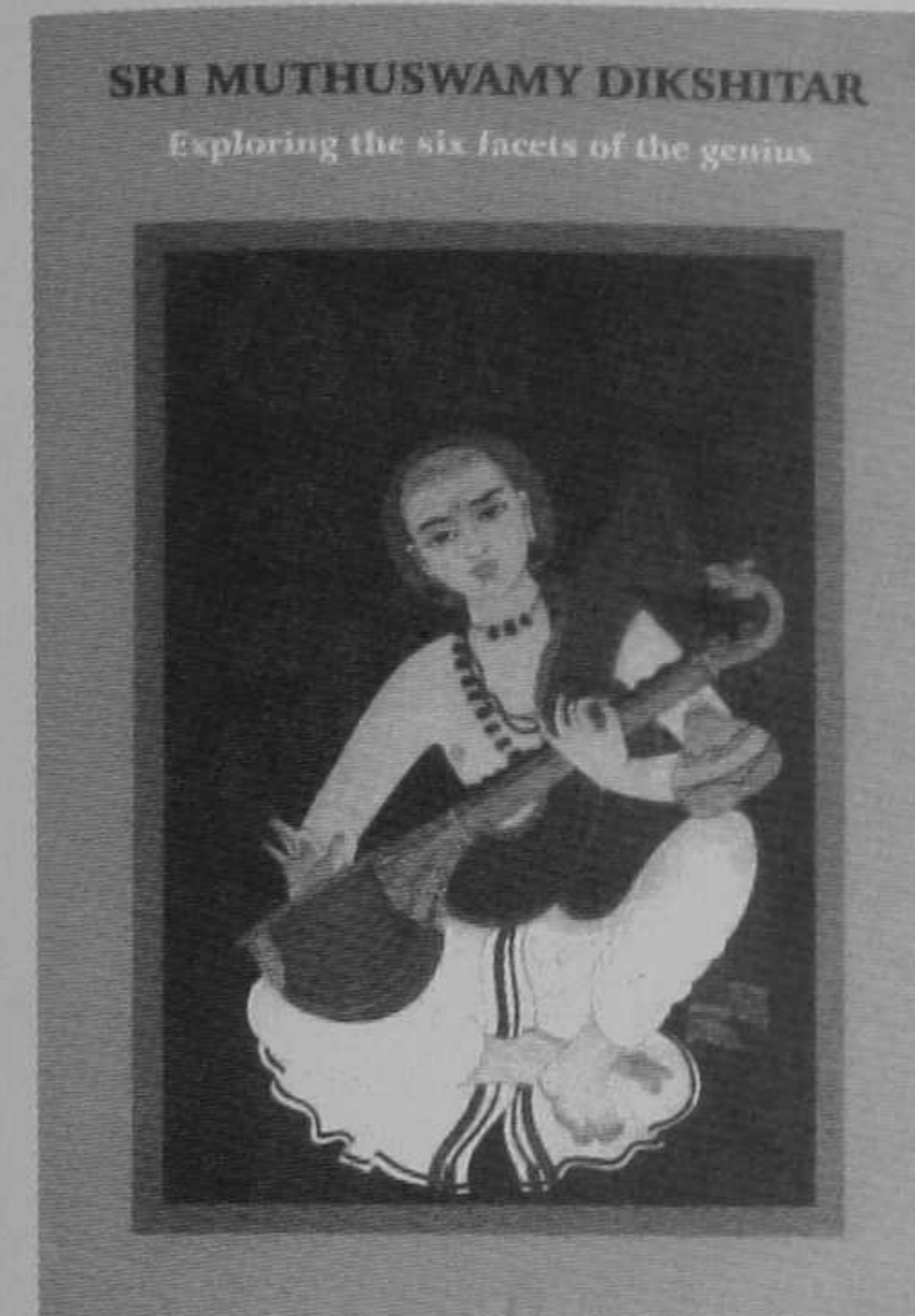
There have been consistent attempts by great musicians and scholars in the last century to popularize Venkata Kavi's compositions. G.N. Balasubramaniam wrote a major article on Venkata Kavi in the Tamil magazine *Kalki*, and organised a series on Venkata Kavi in All India Radio. Great composers like Papanasam Sivan and Mysore Vasudevachar acknowledged the greatness of Venkata Kavi. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer equated Venkata Kavi to the Trinity in a forward he wrote.

Venkata Kavi's aradhana is celebrated in Oottukadu in the month of August and has also been initiated in places like Chennai, Mysore, Bangalore, Dallas and Minneapolis.

Another point which might seem obvious, but needs to be pondered over is that composers like, say, Venkata Kavi or Muthuswamy Dikshitar who created highly esoteric kritis like the *Navavarana* kritis, may not have intended their compositions to be rendered on the concert platform at all, rather, they might have composed and rendered these as part of their religious or spiritual pursuits.

Book Review Study marred by poor editing

A. Seshan



Sri Muthuswamy Dikshitar - Exploring the six facets of the genius, Geetha Rajagopal, Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha, 292 Comrade Harbanslal Marg, Sion, Mumbai 400022, Pages 132, price Rs. 150.

The author's objective is to highlight the six 'Angas' or facets of Sri Muthuswami Dikshitar, the composer, the philosopher, scholar, poet, spiritualist and traveller. There is an elaborate Preface wherein she makes a comparative study of Arunagirinathar and Dikshitar in support of a popular belief that the latter was a reincarnation of the former. It is followed by Introduction, the biography of Ramaswami Dikshitar, a comparative study of the Carnatic Music Trinity, biographic details of Muthuswami Dikshitar and the usage of Sanskrit in his songs. Then come the chapters dealing with the six facets, referred to above. At the end there is a brief write-up on Dikshitar's disciples followed by acknowledgements, bibliography and photos of some of the temples visited by the vaggeyakara.

The author's appreciation of, and devotion to, Dikshitar is evident from the high tributes she pays to him in respect of each of the six aspects of his personality referred to above. At times it leads to the narration taking on the hues of hagiography rather than biography. While none can object to the description of the towering personality of Dikshitar in superlative terms one needs to keep in mind that he was a human like the other members of the Trinity.

At times the author makes statements that are somewhat not tight or right. The first sentence in the second para of Preface reads thus: "There is hardly another musical culture in the world that is as intensive and audible as Indian classical music, one which leads the listener into an absolute silence of spiritual realization." To pass such a judgement one should have studied the musical cultures in different parts of the world. It is not likely in this case. As a rasika, I wish what she says about the listener being led into absolute silence of spiritual realization is really the case. We know the harassment of a serious rasika by the mindless conversation of others in the neighbouring seats in the auditorium and the newly-arrived nuisance of the mobile phone.

Another statement: "The wealth of gamaka-s present in his kritis (sangatis) cannot be seen in any other composer's kritis" (p 44). The author seems to have mixed up gamakas with sangatis. There are any number of vaggeyakaras besides the Trinity whose kritis are full of gamakas. To give one example, Pallavi Gopala Iyer's Kalyani kriti *Needu charana* literally drips with gamakas. Tyagaraja, who is credited with the introduction of sangatis in kritis, holds the record for them. There are more than 40 of them in *Chakkani* in Kharaharapriya. In fact, according to experts, some of the sangatis in kritis like *Vatapi* or *Sri Subrahmanyaya* were not the creations of Dikshitar but of musicians like Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer.

The statement that, "all his songs have only one charanam" (p 22), is wrong as shown in the book itself.

In terms of what is contained in the book I would like to say that the author has more or less achieved her objectives. There are many other points that can be covered under the six facets but perhaps could not be done due to the limitation of space. "The Magnificence of Muthuswami Dikshitar" in the October-December 2006 issue of *Shanmukha* deals with them.

What mars her sincere and scholarly effort is the humongous number of howlers that one finds on page after page. It is the result of a deficiency in drafting and error-prone editing. While the author is responsible for factual accuracy it is the editor who has to ensure that a proper decorum is observed in grammar, syntax, spellings, transliteration from one language to another, etc. On both scores the publication fails. It will suffice if a few examples are given. 'Dikshitar' is spelt correctly on the cover but throughout the book he becomes 'Dhikshitar'. Ghamakas, mela kartha, mudhra, Ada (instead of Ata) tala, vageyakara, and mattu (for matu) are some of the numerous errors in transliteration from Tamil or Sanskrit to English.

On page 14 Tirumangai Alwar's poems are classified into six categories. "Periya Thirumadal" is mentioned twice as a result of which one gets only five categories. The number of lines in the composition is also different from each other in the two references. 'Subaraya Sastri' is mentioned as the author of *Sangita Sampradaya Pradarsini* on page 18 and Subbarama Sastri on page 19. She gets the author's name right when she refers to Subbarama Dikshitar on page 83 but makes a mistake in referring to his book as Sangeetha Sampradaya Varshini. In the bibliography it is Subbarayya (*sic*) Sastri.

Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha has been serving society in various fields besides music, dance and theatre. It is good to know that it has now entered the field of the publication of books with the one under review. One hopes the future publications will be of the same high standards that it maintains in its other activities.

OBITUARY



Dr. V. V. Srivatsa

Dr. V.V. Srivatsa, Sanskrit scholar, musicologist, contemporary vageyakara of merit and founder of Gurughanjali passed away on 21st April, 2012. He had spent a fortune to propagate Muthuswami Dikshitar's compositions and encouraged a number of artistes to learn them by providing a platform to present them in exclusive concerts arranged through Gurughanjali. An engineer by profession, he was a multifaceted personality with a deep knowledge of various forms of music, Vedas, Mimamsa, Divya Prabhandas and fluency in English, Hindi, Tamil, Sanskrit, French and German.

He was in Mumbai for many years and had given quite a few lecture demonstrations in the city, a couple of which have been brought out as booklets - Splendour of Sankarabharanam, Navavarana kritis of Dikshitar and on ragas with names containing the name Manohari.

Tagore Academy Puraskar for Rajee Narayan

Jyothi Mohan



Rajee Narayan

The measure of who we are, is what we do with what we have, it is said. Guru Rajee Narayan has proved this over the years with single-minded devotion and dedication to the fine arts. She has been the recipient of several awards over the years. The latest is the coveted Tagore Academy Puraskar conferred upon her by the Sangeet Natak Akademy, New Delhi.

Guru Rajee Narayan was born on 19th August 1931, in Chennai. She made a name for herself when she was barely seven, as a singing star in movies produced by her father. She started learning dance when she was just five and had her arangetram when she was nine years old. As a vocalist, she gave her first solo performance at the age of fourteen. Guru Rajee Narayan established her institution Nritya Geethanjali in 1965, when she migrated to Mumbai. Branches of the institution have

since been established in Australia, Canada and the U.S. by her senior disciples. The Guru has conducted over 200 arangetrams in Bharatanatyam and a few in Carnatic music over the past four decades. She has also conducted classes and workshops in Carnatic music and nattuvangam. She has to her credit several compositions for dance, which were released as Nritya Geetamala in two volumes. She has also authored the Sangeeta Sastramala and Natya Sastra Mala, invaluable to young dancers and teachers alike. Erudite and well-versed in several languages, she is a much sought-after speaker at conferences and seminars. It is little wonder therefore that several awards have come her way over the years. Shreshta Kala Acharya, Rashtriya Sanskritik Puraskar, Lifetime Achievement Award for Nritya, Swar Sadhna Ratna, Bharat Ratna Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi Best Teacher Award, are some of the major awards that rest lightly on her shoulders. A composer, musician, dancer, dance guru, choreographer and conductor—all in one, Guru Rajee Narayan has carved a niche for herself in the field of dance and music, inspiring hundreds of performing artistes.

ReaderSpeak

Article "Kanakadasa and Nandanar - Devotion the lone way to overcome all odds" in Jan-Mar 2012 Shanmukha issue literally took me to Tirupungur temple, which I visited with my family a few years back. I wanted to emphasize the fact that in Tirupungur temple Nandanar's statue has been set up right outside the temple at a long distance from where one can have a clear darshan of Lord Shiva right inside the sanctum sanctorum, as the Nandi bull has moved slightly to the side. One should see it to believe that the Nandi's face has an astonished expression with its tongue drawn inside, as if it was totally surprised by Lord Shiva's command to move slightly so that His devotee, Nandanar, could have darshan easily.

Normally, in most Shiva temples, where a big Nandi is present, one can see the smiling face of Nandi with its tongue protruding outside. But in Tirupungur temple, there is definitely a change in the expression of Nandi's face. Such interesting stories about Bhakti or devotion, is the uniqueness of our Bharata Desam that one cannot find anywhere else in the world. Ultimately the Lord Himself has to surrender to His devotee's Bhakti and become his slave.

Any way I would like to thank Gayathri Chandrasekhar for her excellent article.

Vijayalakshmi Balakrishna,
Chembur,
Mumbai

The Jan-Mar 2012 issue of Shanmukha (and the magazine) is very readable, neither too frivolous nor too heavy. Good work. I have preserved all previous issues.

Sakuntala Narasimhan,
Bangalore

WRITE TO US !

We would love to get to know you, dear reader, and hear your views, suggestions and thoughts on the journal or any topic related to the performing arts.

Please email us at : bhamusic22@gmail.com

OR write in to us at :

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Sabha Roundup

Concert of Shreya Devnath 25th March 2012

Jyothi Mohan

Shreya Devnath's violin concert at the Jasubhai convention hall bore the unmistakable stamp of Lalgudi style. Her confidence, quick-silver swaraprastaras and ability to reproduce her guru's pathantharam faithfully were the distinguishing features of her recital. Kumbakonam Swaminathan, a disciple of Poongulam S. Subramaniam played the mridangam and Shri Krishnan, a disciple of ghatam maestro Vikku Vinayakaram provided support on the ghatam.

She began with the Neelambari varnam of her mentor neatly rendered in two speeds. *Sabhpathiku* in Abhogi followed. The beautiful sangatis bore the stamp of her guru. The brisk kalpana swaras in one avartanam that she effortlessly played, for the pallavi line, had a great variety in different rhythmic patterns. Charukesi alapana preceding Tyagaraja's *Adamodi galade* was sketchy. It consisted of beautiful phrases but the raga bhavam did not come out clearly. The kriti was rendered with finesse and with all the beautiful sangatis of the Lalgudi bani. Swaraprastara again was very enjoyable with kuraippu at madhyamam. *Mamava Raghurama* in Saranga set to Roopaka tala was sahitya-oriented. The violin literally sang the composition. Mohanam was taken up next for elaboration. The alapana was played at a leisurely pace and made an impact. A few phrases of Kalyani in the lower octave could have been avoided. *Mati matiki* of Tyagaraja in Misrachapu was again reminiscent of her guru. Kalpana swaras were very lively and full of varied patterns. Kalpanaswaras are her strong point one felt. Excellent kuraippu alternating between gandharam and dhaivatam made this number very impressive. The tani that followed was lively and interesting. *Manasa sancharare* was evocative. The RTP was especially composed for this concert, appropriately in Shanmukhapriya. *Vaa, Guha, Muruga Shanmukha, unadu padam tunai* was the pallavi in Adi tala with eduppu at one-fourth aksharam. She did trikalam competently before embarking on the string of ragas in the ragamalika swaraprastara. A shaky Bilahari was followed in quick succession by Suryakantam, Bahudari and Kapi. The reverse was done brilliantly and earned the spontaneous appreciation of the audience. A brief tani by the percussionists added lustre. *Eppo Varuvaro* in Jonpuri was played in celebration of Madurai Mani Iyer's centenary. The popular lilting Mand tillana of Lalgudi (which, as announced by Shreya, had been composed especially for Dr. Padma Subramanyam) provided the perfect finale to her enjoyable concert. Barring the noticeable absence of neraval in the recital and manodharma in raga essays, Shreya Devnath shows immense talent and promise. That she is hard-working and sincere was evident throughout the performance. With more practice and maturity she will be a leading violinist in the future.

Concert of Sikkil Mala Chandrasekhar 12th May 2012

Nallini Dinesh

The concert began on a sober note with the news of the demise of a Mumbai percussion artiste well-known to the sabha and the main artiste of the evening herself, Venkatesh Rangachari.

Mala announced that she was going to play the varnam and RTP in the same raga (Madhyamavati) as per an old tradition in Carnatic music. The varnam was played after an invocatory shloka on Dakshinamurthy, *Om Nama Pranavaarthaaya* (which was often sung by Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi). *Gam Ganapate*, Harikesanallur Muthaiah Bhagavathar's kriti in Hamsadhvani was played next with kalpana swaras at pallavi. Ramaswamy Shivan's Nagaswaravali kriti *Shree Shankara Guruvaram* and Thyagaraja's Amritavahini kriti *Shree Rama Paadama* followed. Mala played a very good Harikambhoji alapana with clean phrasing without a



Rajesh Srinivasan (mridangam), Alathur Raja Ganesh (kanjira), Sikkil Mala Chandrasekhar (flute), M.R. Gopinath (violin)

hint of Kambhoji or Khamas and good blowing, steady on tara sthayi shadjam. M.R. Gopinath's violin alapana was very good too. Kalpana swaras were played at pallavi with a good korvai at the end. Muthuswamy Dikshitar's *Govardhana Gireesham* was followed by a detailed Poorvikalyani alapana that brought out the essence of the raga. Shyama Shastri's *Ninnuvinaga mari* was rendered with neraval and kalpana swaras. The percussion tani avartanam in viloma chaapu was good. The Madhyamavati pallavi *Sugunavati Gunavati Yuvati Madhyamavati* was in Adi 2-kalai with ateeta eduppu - 1/2 idam in last veechu. Trikalam and tisram were performed and the ragamlika swaras were in Dharmavati, Revati and Saraswati.

Concert of Shyamala Sajnani 23rd June 2012

Jyothi Mohan



Shyamala Sajnani (veena), Patri Satish Kumar (mridangam), Dr. Karthick (ghatam)

Due to unavoidable circumstances, Jayanthi Kumaresh, who was slated to perform that evening, could not come. Shyamala Sajnani, despite the short notice, accepted the invitation of the sabha. Patri Satish Kumar accompanied her on the mridangam and Dr. Karthick on the ghatam.

The concert started with the Vasanta varnam, *Ninnu kori*. Soft and pleasing, with both the accompanists adding to the mood, the varnam set the pace for the evening. *Varanarada* in Vijayasree was followed by a brief sketch of Shuddha dhanyasi, for *Himagiri Tanaye*. An elaborate Todi replete with raga bhava led to Tyagaraja's *Enduku dayaradura* in Misrachapu talam. Kalyanavasantam before Tyagaraja's *Nadaloludai* was played well. Mohanam alapana and tanam preceded *Nannupalimpa* of Tyagaraja with good neraval and swaraprastara. In the tani avartana, Satish Kumar wove magic with his lightning-fast fingers and Kartik rose to the challenge effectively. A brief Poorvikalyani was followed by an elaborate ragamlika tanam in Malayamarutam, Hindolam and Brindavani. The pallavi *Jagannatha Sahite..Nada Sahite..Sahite..Hite...Te Namaste* was in khanda jati Triputa talam and she did the trikalam. The swaraprastara in the above ragas was very engrossing. The RTP was enhanced by Satish Kumar and Kartik. *Karpagame* in Madhyamavati, an evocative Yamuna kalyani followed by *Sri Ramachandra Kripalu* of Tulsidas, the Kabir bhajan *Hari bolo, bhai Hari bolo*, tuned by her father Shri Aswathama in Desh, the Meera bhajan *Paga Ghungroo Bandh Meera Naachi re* in Chandrakauns, *Ksheerabdhhi kanyakaku* of Annamayya in Kurinji followed by the mangalam concluded the concert. The camaraderie on stage, with each artiste appreciative of the other was a treat to behold.

Happenings at the Vidyalaya

Nalini Dinesh

Patnam Subramanya Iyer, Poochi Sreenivasa Iyengar, Muthiah Bhagavatar, Mysore Vasudevachar and Other Contemporary Composers' Day 31st March 2012



Padmini Vijayaraghavan and Savithri Ramachandran(vocal), Rajani Iyer(violin), S. Gopakumar (mridangam)

The kriti rendition of Padmini Vijayaraghavan and Savithri Ramachandran stood out for its traditional purity and aesthetic appeal. Beginning with Mysore Vasudevachar's Gowla kriti *Pranamamyaham* and the popular Khamas kriti *Brochevarevarura* (prefaced by a brief sketch of Khamas by Savithri), the duo then sang a rare kriti of Patnam Subramanya Iyer in raga Bhairavam *Nannubrova* followed by the same composer's Devamanohari kriti *Neekela*. Padmini sang a short Poorvikalyani alapana followed by a superbly rendered *Paramapavana Rama*. Muthiah Bhagavatar's Mohanakalyani kriti *Bhuvaneshwari* and Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar's Surutti javali *Veganeevu* concluded the recital. The duo's voices blended well though they did take a little while to warm up and completely align with shruti.



Dr. Prabhavathy P.N. (vocal), Rajani Iyer (violin), Gopakumar (mridangam)

Dr. P.N. Prabhavathy has a powerful voice which would sound even better with modulation. She commenced her recital with Patnam Subramanya Iyer's Begada varnam and Mysore Vasudevachar's Kambhoji kriti *Lambodaram avalambe*. This was followed by an alapana of Reetigowla for the Mysore Sadashiva Rao kriti *Mama Hridaye*. A rare Mysore Sadashiva Rao kriti in Poorvikalyani *Gangaadhara* followed. The kriti had beautiful sahitya describing Lord Shiva and evoked the mood of Shivaratri. Bilahari alapana and Patnam Subramanya Iyer's kriti *Paridaanam Icchite* followed. The final item was a tillana in Saveri which has been tuned by the vocalist and has

sahitya composed by her husband. Three mudras had been incorporated in the sahitya- raga mudra, the name of the river - Brihannadi (or Vanpuzha in Malayalam) on the banks of which, the temple of the goddess on whom this tillana has been composed resides and the name of the composer "padmaraja".

Rajani Iyer and S. Gopakumar accompanied the vocalists on violin and mridangam respectively.

Swati Tirunal Day 21st Apr 2012



Bhavani Srinivasan (vocal),
S. Dinesh (violin), Prasanna Kumar C (mridangam)

Bhavani's recital of Swati Tirunal kritis was marked with azhuttam and clarity backed by solid pathantaram. Beginning with the brisk Vasanta kriti *Paramapurusha*, she gave a short sketch of Reetigowla raga to preface *Paripalayamam*. The Hemavati kriti that followed, *Pranayam Santatam* in Adi 2-kalai was pleasant on the ear and absorbing, it had the unusual *Taamarasanabha* as the composer's mudra. This was followed by a short Bilahari alapana which was rather repetitive in phrasing, and a kriti which was again in Adi 2-kalai, *Smara Sada*. Violinist S. Dinesh's Bilahari alapana was appealing. The Bhairavi Navaratri kriti *Janani Maamava* and *Bhogeendra Shaayinam* (Kuntalavaraali) concluded the recital. One felt that crisper akaara (with faster sangatis) for the different kriti section endings (i.e. ending of pallavi, anupallavi, charanam) would further enhance the appeal of Bhavani's kriti rendition.

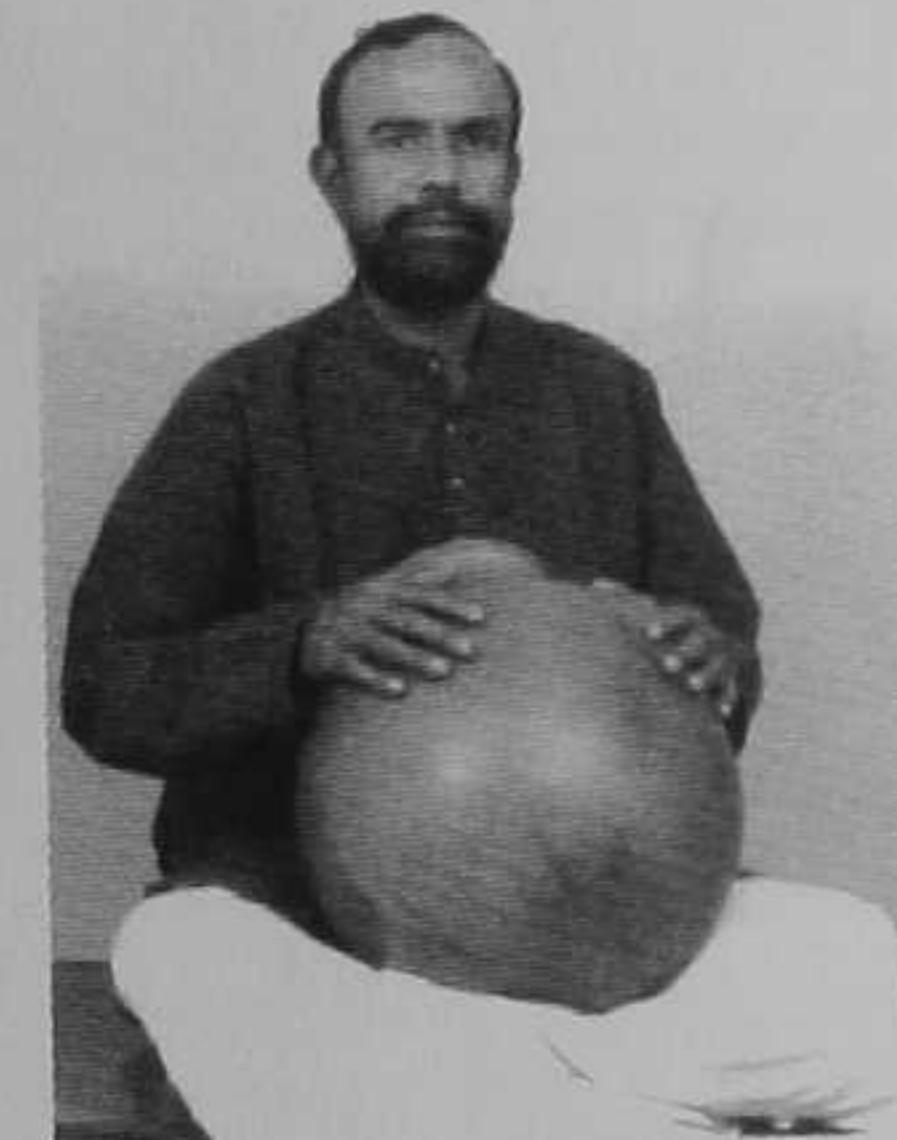


Shivakumar Krishnan (vocal), S. Dinesh (violin),
Prasanna Kumar C (mridangam)

Shivakumar's recital had never a dull moment. Ironically, the factor which contributed to the enormous appeal of his renditions also proved to be his undoing at various points in his recital, namely his uncontrolled manodharma. While it worked very well for his opening kriti *Deva Deva* (prefaced with a short Mayamalavagowla alapana), it took away from the beauty of the next kriti rendered, the Nattakuranji Navaratri kriti *Paahi Janani*. In fact, it also diminished the raga bhava, there was a shade of Surati at one point. This was followed by an excellent rendition of the Athana padam *Kantatava*. Shivakumar's diction for this Malayalam padam, as also for Sanskrit lyrics in general is an area which has scope for improvement. For instance, *Kamakoti* was pronounced as *Kamakodi*, *Naashini* was pronounced as *Naasini*. *Saramaina* was when his manodharma really exploded - his endless improvisation (he even sang kalpana swaras, which is not encouraged in a Vaggeyakara day programme) dazzled till a point, after which it became a little tiresome. A Hamsanandi tillana was a refreshing end to the recital. Dinesh played a good Nattakuranji and Behag.

Prasanna Kumar gave good support on the mridangam. K.V. Santhi's compering was cheerful and endearing.

OBITUARY



N. Govindarajan

Ghatam vidwan Prof. N. Govindarajan passed away on 7th May 2012. He began learning mridangam at the age of seven from T.R. Harihara Sharma, but switched to ghatam, training under vidwans Vikku Vinayakram, Karaikkudi Mani and K.M. Vaidyanathan. Taking the stage professionally at the age of 13, Prof. Govindarajan accompanied many great musicians such as M.D. Ramanathan, M. L. Vasantakumari, Chittibabu, Maharajapuram Santhanam, Voleti Venkateshwarulu, Veena S. Balachander, D.K. Pattammal, Lalgudi Jayaraman, N. Ramani and M.S. Gopalakrishnan.

An A-grade AIR artiste, Govindarajan was a professor of Philosophy at the A.M. Jain College, University of Madras for 28 years. A committed teacher, he conducted music workshops both in India and abroad. He was the co-ordinator, advisor and instructor for the Colgate India study group from New York during its semester in Chennai.

**SRI SHANMUKHANANDA KANCHI MAHASWAMI
SANGEETHA SANGRAHAALAY
SUMMARY OF ARCHIVES**

Summary of Audios

	Carnatic	Hindustani	Total
Concerts	11,969	1,632	13,601
Duration	26,814 hours	3,450 hours	30,264 hours
Tracks	99,244	10,288	1,09,532
Size	1,511.2 GB	194.2 GB	1,705.4 GB
Classifications	345	323	668
Main Artistes Covered	1,045 Artistes	335 Artistes	1,380 Artistes
Accompanists Covered	1,182 Artistes	116 Artistes	1,298 Artistes
Venues / Sabhas Covered	356	41	397
Cities Covered	189	43	232
Years Covered	1928 to 2010	1935 to 2009	1928 to 2010
Tracks Format	Mp3 44.1 Khz. 128 kbps Stereo 16 bit		
Tag	Id3 Tag Version 1.1 and Version 2.2		

Summary of Videos

Classification	Videos	Tracks	Size
Carnatic	1,328	2,439	829.3G
Hindustani	241	394	124.7G
Devotional	1,334	1,677	433.3G
Dance	209	397	118.8G
All	3,112	4,907	1506.3G

Total Size of Archives

Carnatic Archives (Audio)	1,511.2 GB *
Hindustani Archives (Audio)	194.2 GB *
Videos - All	1,506.3 GB *
Total	3,211.7 GB *



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Subscription to 'Shanmukha'

An Appeal

Members are aware of the publication of 'Shanmukha', the professional quarterly of the Sabha. It has completed 35 years of existence.

The publication has a high standing among the professionals and aficionados of music, dance and theatre and adds prestige to the Sabha's image. It is one of the few music sabhas in the country that bring out their own professional magazines. The contributions are from experts in their fields. There are reports on the activities of the Sabha. Sometimes it carries valuable articles from other professional magazines and from its own issues of the distant past that are not accessible to the readers otherwise. What is more, there are instances of the articles of 'Shanmukha' being reproduced elsewhere with the Editor's concurrence. The attachment on the contents of the last two issues of the magazine may be seen in this connection.

The subscription for the magazine has not been raised for many years despite increase in the cost of printing. It is now decided to raise the prices as per rates given below:

Sr.No.	Particulars	Present Rates	New Rates
1.	Subscription for 3 years*	—	₹ 200/-
2.	Price per current issue	₹ 10/-	₹ 20/-
3.	Price per back issue	₹ 5/-	₹ 10/-

* It has been decided to accept subscription for minimum of 3 years.

The Sabha makes an earnest appeal to those members who are not subscribers to take subscription. Members may also consider canvassing for subscriptions with friends and relatives here and in other places. The new rates will be applicable from April - June 2010 issue.

It has also been decided to terminate the life subscription of ₹ 500/- with immediate effect. While the Sabha would continue to honour its commitment to continue to supply the magazine without any interruption, it makes a special appeal to life subscribers to help by making one time donation of say ₹ 1000/- that will be appreciated very much as it will add to the corpus of funds of 'Shanmukha'. Of course, larger or even smaller amounts are welcome.

Members of the Sabha are also requested to consider procuring advertisements from banks and business houses that earmark considerable funds for publicity through various media.

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Inside full page	10,000	Overall Page Size : 17.28 cm x 24.13 cm
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